

"THE SIREN", by [illegible] COMPLETE NOVELETTE

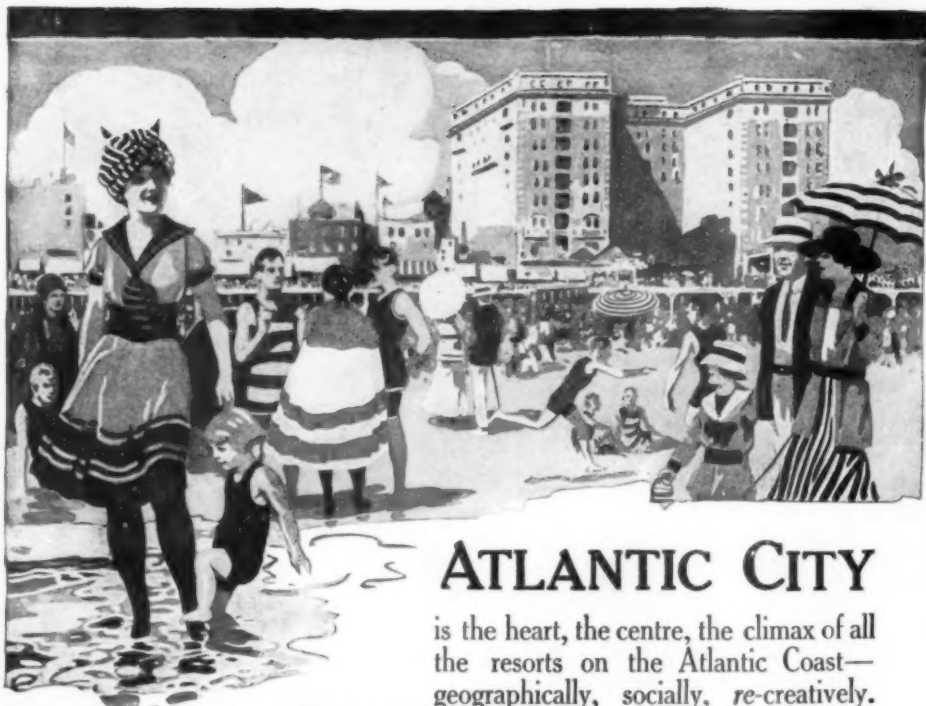
SMART SET

*Magazine of
Cleverness*



'The End of Ilsa Menteth',
by Lilith Benda
'The Three Sailors' Gambit',
by Lord Dunsany
'I'm a Stranger Here Myself',
by Sinclair Lewis
'The Duel of Sex', by Owen Hatteras

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The SMART SET

Edited by

George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken

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A HUNDRED BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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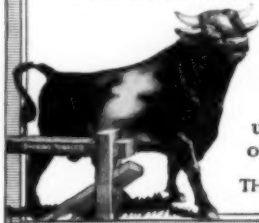
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The SMART SET

The magazine with many imitators but no rivals

A FOOTNOTE ON THE DUEL OF SEX

By Owen Hatteras

IF I were a woman I should want to be a blonde, with golden, silky hair, pink cheeks and sky-blue eyes. It would not bother me to think that this color scheme was a flaunting badge of stupidity; I would have a better arm in my arsenal than mere intelligence; I would get a husband by easy surrender while the brunettes attempted it vainly by frontal assault.

Men are not easily taken by frontal assault; it is only stratagem that can quickly knock them down. To be a blonde, pink, soft and delicate, is to be a stratagem. It is to be a ruse, a feint, an ambush. It is to fight under the Red Cross flag. A man sees nothing alert and designing in those pale, crystalline eyes; he sees only something helpless, childish, weak; something that calls to his compassion; something that appeals powerfully to his conceit in his own strength. And so he is taken before he knows that there is a war. He lifts his portcullis in Christian charity—and the enemy is in his citadel.

The brunette can make no such stealthy and sure attack. No matter

how subtle her art, she can never hope to quite conceal her intent. Her eyes give her away. They flash and glitter. They have depths. They draw the male gaze into mysterious and sinister recesses. And so the male behind the gaze flies to arms. He may be taken in the end—indeed, he usually is—but he is not taken by surprise; he is not taken without a fight. A brunette has to battle for every inch of her advance. She is confronted by an endless succession of Dead Man's Hills, each equipped with telescopes, semaphores, alarm gongs, wireless. The male sees her clearly through her densest smoke-clouds . . . But the blonde captures him under a flag of truce. He regards her tenderly, kindly, almost pityingly, until the moment the gyves are upon his wrists.

It is all an optical matter, a question of color. The pastel shades deceive him; the louder hues send him to his artillery. God help, I say, the red-haired girl!—She goes into action with warning pennants flying. The dullest, blindest man can see her a mile away; he can catch the alarming flash of her

hair long before he can see the whites, or even the terrible red-browns, of her eyes. She has a long field to cross, heavily under defensive fire, before she can get into rifle range. Her quarry has a chance to throw up redoubts, to dig himself in, to call for reinforcements, to elude her by ignominious flight. She must win, if she is to win at all, by an unparalleled combination of craft and resolution. She must be swift, daring, merciless. Even the brunette of black and penetrating eye has great advantages over her. No wonder she never lets go, once her arms are around her antagonist's neck! No wonder she is, of all women, the hardest to shake off!

All nature works in circles. Causes become effects; effects develop into causes. The red-haired girl's dire need of courage and cunning has augmented her store of those qualities by the law of natural selection. She is, by long odds, the most intelligent and bemusing of women. She shows cunning, foresight, technique, variety. She always fails a dozen times before she succeeds; but she brings to the final business the abominable expertness of a Hindenburg, a Joffre; she has learnt painfully by the process of trial and error. Red-haired girls are intellectual stimulants. They know all the tricks. They are so clever that they have even cast a false glamour of beauty about their worst defect—their harsh and

gaudy hair. They give it euphemistic and deceitful names—auburn, bronze, Titian. They overcome by their hellish arts that deep-seated dread of red which is inborn in all of God's creatures. They charm men with what would even alarm bulls.

And the blondes, by following the law of least resistance, have gone in the other direction. The great majority of them—I speak, of course, of natural blondes; not of the immoral wenches who work their atrocities under cover of a synthetic blonderness—are quite as shallow and stupid as they look. No one ever heard a blonde say anything worth hearing; the most they ever achieve is a specious, baby-like prattling, an infantile artlessness. But let us not blame them for nature's work. Why, after all, be intelligent? It is, at best, no more than a capacity for unhappiness. The blonde not only doesn't miss it; she is even better off without it. What imaginable intelligence could compensate her for the flat blueness of her eyes, the xanthous pallor of her hair, the doll-like pink of her cheeks? What conceivable cunning could do such execution as her stupendous appeal to masculine vanity, sentimentality, egoism?

If I were a woman I should want to be a blonde. My blonderness might be hideous, but it would get me a husband, and it would make him cherish me and love me.



THE object of all philosophy is to teach man what he ought to do. The object of all science is to show him how to do it. The object of all art is to make him glad he is not doing it.



IN the duel of sex woman fights from an armored cruiser and man from an open raft.

THE SIREN

By G. Vere Tyler

CHAPTER I.

SHE had accepted the invitation for the house party and now at the dressing hour she was standing at the window of the wicker and cretonne decorated room that had been assigned her, wondering why.

She knew well enough what had taken her to the other house parties, or lawn parties, or yacht parties, any of the social gatherings that she had never actually at heart participated in—for she was one of those to whom self-created environment meant very nearly all: it was the anticipation of novelty, of the worthwhile man for her to charm, or the woman to eclipse.

She got that far and paused to look out on the beautiful night and forget all these things—novelties that were ever alluring to her, and yet, also, ever disappointing. Over-constructed, over-decorated homes, she thought, like this one, and futile, self-deluded humanity. All these men and women swarmed in honeyed bee-hives of their own making, feasting upon what, even though she had ever been an ardent participator, had never failed to sicken, weary, at times even disgust her. What an elemental thing she was, after all!—a “child of nature” one of the men she had charmed styled her, never failing to begin his notes and letters to her with those words.

At this moment, facing the night—for the twilight had suddenly faded, or she had been standing there a long while—it seemed to her that she was and had ever been just that, a child of nature, reaching out and taking what her mood demanded, just as she was

now taking into her inmost being the blue and golden light of the stars. Of course, what the majority of her moods had cried out for was the satisfying and yet disappointing adulation of men. And now, just as she had wondered a moment before what had dragged her, against her will—everywhere she went was against her will—to this house party, she wondered what had so often dragged her forth to meet men.

A little sense of repugnance that was almost a shiver came over her at the remembrance of the passions, tragedies, brutalities—the latter practised upon herself, for it is the women whom men love most who experience the entire gamut of their brutalities—that had been her portion.

She put her hands on the window-sill and leaned far out, with her chin uplifted and her eyes gathering a dream, to take in all the splendor of the night that was so distinctly not a part of the life she had come here to experience.

And how beautiful that night was! How wonderful the whole day, in fact, had been! This day of surging variety that she had separated herself from her fellows—conscious once or twice to the point of rudeness—to give herself to. She had risen early to greet it, just as she had dressed certain nights to greet some strange man, and then yield about as little of herself to him.

It pleased her to toy with this thought, that every day was a stranger, as much of a stranger as any hitherto unknown person, one that came forward in a kind of glory to meet you in the morning and at night bade you a rather distant farewell. In that re-

spect, she suddenly thought, days were very much like men: they appeared, remained with you a few hours, sometimes showering wonderful offerings, and then mysteriously disappeared. Yes, days and men never failed to fold their tents in the end. And yet to possess, even though a recognized non-possession, either!

She laughed an uneasy laugh; her ideas had appeared a bit grotesque and absurd. Ah, she would shut out men—plenty of time for them when she went below!—and give all her thoughts to this vanishing day that had been hers. The bare wonder of it, she marvelled, was almost stifling! She must—she regained her erect position—go over it all, go over it from the first moment to the last, just as she had so often gone over a recently vanished love affair while all her awakened senses were yet alive. . . . It was only three hours old—she smiled at that—when she had greeted it! She began to recall with almost childish delight how it had rushed in at her windows, purposely left open for it, and with its own hands—her days had hands!—opened her eyes!

How lovely the grey, misty sky at that hour had been! How hushed and mystical the atmosphere! And the little birds in the scraggly cedar tree near her window that had struck her as alarmed by some tragedy they feared, and that somehow had made the scene even more entrancing! Then suddenly, after breakfast, what a change! A brisk wind had sprung up that blew all the greyness and mist away, leaving the sky almost a sharp blue with mammoth bunches of snow-white clouds of strange irregular design, sculptured clouds she remembered she had called them in a kind of ecstasy. How the sun shone and how the waters of the ocean and sands of the beach sparkled! She had stood all alone in this sparkle and laughed. . . . How beautiful to laugh thus as a part of it all! That was what she had felt herself in that moment, a sparkle and a part of it.

And now she must dress, put off this easy, white serge, boyish costume, and her heelless, noiseless shoes that always seemed to make of her a beautiful animal, to put on—it was lying there on the bed—that costume of electric blue that would leave bared her arms and shoulders and show the curves of her implements of war upon men, and high-heeled slippers that would clink like falling icicles on the bare and highly polished floors of the halls.

She turned in, drew her shades, switched on the lights, and stood, just as any woman does, just as she had been doing for so many years, with her eyes upon the gown. The old energy this evening's costuming demanded returned for a moment as she threw off the dress she wore. But when she had seated herself and bent to untie the shoes that had made of her a beautiful animal, and been a part of the day now dead and departed, she fell to thinking again.

Her chair, a low wicker cretonne covered one, was directly beneath the blazing chandelier. She put her head back, looked up at it, shining so relentlessly upon her, rubbing her, she seemed to feel, just as the lights outside did the polished floors, into more metallic brilliance. And then she closed her eyes. . . .

A youth who had driven her up from the station the day before—for of course no man who had ever driven her from a station, or taken her anywhere, or been with her advantageously, or disadvantageously, had failed to single her out for his attentions—came up and stood joyously, so joyously that he appeared to shine, at the head of a long line of men, tragic and haggard, in spite of their good clothes, a bread-line of passion-hungry men—the simile caused a faint, bitter smile—who had been her beggars.

Her lids flashed but closed a bit wearily. All her life she had had an army of beggars at her heels; all her life she had been doling out gifts or favors to men, lifting them to seventh heavens to fling them upon barren

rocks. Ah! that power that she had wielded! What had it not meant; what had it not done! She who was kind of heart, gentle of nature, who loved all the wonders of the universe and who had wept over the sweetness of a baby's smile, what had she not done, what had not been done through her, on account of her—one woman, at a summer house-party, stealing a few moments from the dressing hour!

She sprang to her feet. . . .

"Why," she spoke half aloud, "I've been something of a monster! Men have almost died for me, become wrecks, lost their purpose in life. Homes have been broken up, wives abandoned, children robbed. Young girls have lain awake at night while their fathers prayed for more kisses from me, crying for their fathers; a youth tried to shoot himself in my presence once—ah! And this," she sneered, "is I—just one woman!"

She half laughed, shrugged her shoulders, threw up her arms with a disdainful gesture, and walked over to the snowy bed where the electric blue gown lay like a suit of armor. She touched it, turned it over, and, as she walked away from it, caught sight of herself in a full length mirror and paused, surprised anew at her own beauty, a little in terror of the polished gold of her shoulders. How strong they were; how they bespoke her power! Suddenly it all seemed stupid, this game that not she but Nature had made her play. She could see no wrong in herself; she had always from her own standpoint played fair. Instinctively she had played fair, extending no false hopes, clinging in an almost ardent way to fidelity to women whom she knew, and whom she could hurt. But she *had* hurt them all the same; her presence had hurt them; the fixed gaze of their men upon her had hurt them; the contrast of her had hurt them! This very woman she was now visiting had often been thus hurt by her! And yet this woman had gone on clinging to her, had gone on loving her all these years—loving her, she supposed, be-

cause she had never yielded to her Harry's passion for her, loving her because his love for her had protected her against other women's robberies.

A servant entered at this moment and brought her a note from the youth below. Why was she so long? Had she forgotten her promise of five minutes in the conservatory before dinner? He had been waiting for an hour!

She had forgotten. . . .

This silly fellow, with his twenty years of youth to lay at her feet, who might easily have been her son, and whom she had promised to stroll to the beach with after dinner! She smiled—smiled at the old game, the old game of charming men that had become a science to her, with accurate moves that never failed of a result, like two and two making four. It was because it was all so understood that it seemed silly to her. She was like one who has played chess for many years, moving her little men about, playing for certain positions that meant winning the game. Really there was little difference; she actually saw the men in this way. And really, too, she was tired of the game, "awfully tired." She said this aloud as the servant retired and repeated absently, "tired of it."

And yet—she again flung up her arms—she would dress, dress as she had all the while known she would, and go down and, in one of the shining halls, probably pass Harry, who would catch her wrist and twist it and look that fierce look in her eyes—how long Harry had been doing this!—and go into the conservatory and see the wonder and submission in the youth's small eyes, see their confession and their anxiety, laugh at him in a way to madden him about her a bit more, go to the table and be brilliant for the sake of Virgie—Virgie always looked to her to be brilliant and so entertain her guests for her, a thing Virgie herself, beyond feeding them splendidly from a splendid table, couldn't do. There would follow the music, a dance or two, and then with that anxious waiting youth

to the beach, where the moon would assist her once more.

There was a young girl in the party in love with the youth. How very sweet she was! All young girls were! She wished from the bottom of her heart she could turn him over to her, make him take her to the beach. But it was too late. That ride from the station, and anything but herself was all over. Her subconscious ego, her nature, something that she had nothing to do with, had fixed that!

She glanced at the clock and busied herself with her toilet. . . . Her feet were in the black stockings now, those that had the "hand-embroidered" electric blue love-bows to match her dress, and she was putting on red slippers that would "light up things."

When she came to the dress she was quite absorbed in it, almost excited by it. It was a success. That little Yvonne could fashion things!

She rang for her maid, who fastened it up for her, and the maid laughingly shed, as her mistress always directed her to do, some perfume from atomizers, and shook the powder puff to make a cloud—"make things shadowy." And then she took her seat and put out her hands, those hands the beauty of which never failed to intoxicate her, and had the polisher run over her nails. After that she sprang up, took her stand in front of the full-length mirror and had the girl switch off and then switch on certain lights that she might get effects. And then with her fingers she raised her artificially gold hair until it was lighter about the brow, a kind of halo. And, with the wonders of the night that had enthralled her forgotten, she descended to the conservatory.

Some very fine music from a string orchestra caused her to pause on a landing. It seemed to pour into her nerves like a fluid.

"Virgie," she said under her breath, now descending more leisurely, "certainly does things splendidly!"

She found Harry at the foot of the stairs, waiting to catch her by the wrist, hurt her as he had so often done, and

hiss in her ear: "I'm going to kiss you to-night, Elaine! By God, I'm going to kiss you this night if it costs me my life!"

And there was Virgie appearing suddenly from somewhere and the breaking away—

"All the old stuff," she thought again, suddenly wearied—whether by Harry or by the cigarette smoke that always clung to him she didn't know which. . . .

Her mind flew to the beach and the seaweed. . . . Then Virgie was talking to her, begging her to shine, saying that somebody or other was there. She promised Virgie to shine, just as she had so often done—as often as Harry had waylaid her ferociously and sworn to kiss her.

And then she reached the conservatory and paused among the flowers—how often she had done that, too!—and breathed deeply of their sensuous power. . . . And then the youth who would stir her senses, just because he was a youth and new to her, and who would find life changed for him through her, came forward, no color in his cheeks now, no color at all, and the roundness of his face gone.

CHAPTER II

"WHAT a wonderful life you have lived, Mrs. Gilmore!" he exclaimed fervently, taking both her hands. "I've been sitting here a whole hour thinking of it!"

"Do you know so much of my life, then?" she inquired quizzically as she let him hold her eyes.

"Do I?" and he laughed. "Shall we sit down here? We've a few moments left before dinner, and I'm so awfully, tremendously interested in you! Any fellow would be, of course. You're simply ripping, you know. But mine, I flatter myself," and he laughed, "is a new kind of interest!"

"Indeed!" She was displaying her hands by changing their position so that her rings flashed while she studied them. "What is this new kind of interest?"

"By Jove, you know, I hope it won't offend you!"

"Offend me?"

"Yes, of course, I know a woman like you is rather impervious to that kind of thing! You've had lots of experiences, haven't you? That's why I'm so keen on wanting to know you; it's an awful advantage to a young fellow to associate with an experienced woman, a tremendous education, you know. Say, Mrs. Gilmore, you won't think me fresh, will you, if I ask you to add me to your experiences?"

He was looking at her with all the enthusiasm of a crude hunter handling a new gun. His brusque ingenuousness was as disconcerting as a sudden gust of strong wind, and for one moment she felt the impulse to laugh in his face. If he was contemplating a new kind of experience through her, he was certainly at the same time offering her one, and she couldn't determine, as yet, whether the offer amused or angered her.

There was no denying his earnestness, which to her rather jaded personality was anything but agreeable, but it made him all the more puzzling. He seemed to her to be bent upon projecting himself rather than exploiting her—to see, in the matter of them, himself only. She concluded that it was more irritating than amusing, and experienced acute dislike of him. It was in the very face of things, absurd to be giving her time to this youth who, except for his immaculateness, didn't even please her eye. He appeared to have grown shorter, his complexion was not good, and that plastered hair!

With an impulsive movement she stood up. "We really," she said curtly, "should be in the drawing-room!"

"Oh! I say," and he rather familiarly caught her hand and attempted to resear her, "you're not going to run off like that! I want to talk to you! Hang being in the drawing-room! We're always in drawing-rooms before dinners! Come on! You will let me look forward to that experience with you, won't you? Listen now;

about the last thing my governor said to me was, 'Lanny, have an experience with Elaine Gilmore; it will land you for life!'"

"May I inquire," asked Elaine, the irritability betraying itself in her voice, "what kind of an experience it is your governor referred to?"

"Why, you know, don't you? And you won't flunk, will you? I came here just to meet you, got Mrs. Lenox to let me go for you to the train, and all that. I've been awfully excited over the whole thing! Didn't you see it yesterday? Where have you been all day anyway? I've been in a regular fever about you; I wanted Mrs. Lenox to have a search made!"

She wrung from him the hand he had again grasped. "Do you know," she remarked, eyeing him critically, "that you strike me as being a most remarkable, I should say, audacious, young man?"

"But why? Oh! come now, Mrs. Gilmore, a woman of your experience doesn't shy at a hare in the bushes, you know that! You will go to the beach with me after dinner, won't you? You won't back out—I've counted upon it! You'll keep your word, won't you? You can trust me! I've got the right stuff in me! You remember my governor? He remembered you, I can tell you! I was with him in Florida, all those months before he died! God! how he loved to talk about you! 'She broke up the home, Lanny,' he used to say, 'and here I am, but it was worth it, boy.' And then he always said that same thing: 'Keep your head, know what you are doing, Lanny, but when you grow up go in for an experience with a matured woman—Elaine Gilmore, if you can!' He used to laugh at my telling him you would be an old woman by that time! I can see him lifting that thin white finger of his now and fixing on me those burning eyes—hear him say, 'She'll never be an old woman, Lanny; wait till you see her! She'll make you forget ages and conditions and remember only her!' And that's what I've been looking forward

to! Oh! I say, Mrs. Gilmore, you won't flunk, will you? I want to just forget everything, your age, all your past life and just remember your present!"

She grew white and took a step from him as though he held concealed weapons that he might level at her. But a moment later her first impression of him revived and she laughed in his face.

"Why do you laugh?" he asked, approaching her eagerly. "This is awfully serious to me, you know. Why do you laugh?"

"I suppose," she answered as she stepped back and eyed him superciliously, "at the unconscious insolence of youth!"

"Oh! age! What's that got to do with it! It's an accepted theory, isn't it, that every young fellow should fall in love with some matured woman—you won't mind my saying this, will you?—to fit him for the future—some young girl that's in some convent or school, you know, ripening for him?"

She stared at him aghast a moment, while the pallor that had touched her face revealed to herself, if not to him, all her forty-two years. And then she smiled a somewhat tragic and yet a sneering smile.

"Oh! I say," said the youth, "don't give me that kind of a smile, it takes me off my pegs! I'm not equal to you unless you're going to be sympathetic. Of course, I know in your eyes I'm only a boy! You see," and he impetuously appealed to her, "what I am asking you is to teach me!"

"Dinner is served," announced the butler at the door, and as he disappeared they rather ambled out between the flowers together, she breathing in their passionate fragrance, he still talking passionately in her ear and begging her to keep her promise to stroll to the beach with him.

"I've been inquiring," he said, "I found the gardener. 'The moon will arrive at exactly eleven P. M.!'"

He laughed a boyish laugh, and when they were in the hall, where the lights

blazed hurtfully, he paused and arrested her.

"Say, wait a moment, won't you? By Jove, Mrs. Gilmore, you are ripping! Do you know what I wish! I wish to God I could have met you when you were a girl. You must have been a dream at eighteen!"

CHAPTER III

ELAINE had always recognized stimulants as destroyers of those vivid impressions of the moment that went to make up her life. But to-night she resorted to them. Not only was she indifferent to present impressions, and possessed of a certain callousness to the occasion; she also wanted to erase other impressions that had attacked her brain like sharp incisions and that had drawn blood.

She had known, as she had only a short while before recalled, all the brutalities of which men were capable. She had even known their fatigues, the fitfulness and selfish cruelty of the male in all its varied forms, but while these things had often irritated, provoked, even pained, while—that was a long while ago—she had experienced the feminine pleasure and anguish at some passion taking deep root, she had always been able to recover from these things because she had never failed, in the end, to be able to understand and catalogue them. But this thing that had happened to-night, this arrow in the hands of a child, had pierced her heart and, as it were, pinioned her, dazed and helpless, to a tree. This was something new, and resembled suffering. It baffled her and she was angered that she could not dismiss it.

She started when Virgie called her attention to the fact that someone was speaking to her, and colored as she recalled that Virgie was relying upon her to shine. And then she did shine—with all the brilliance of one put to the test, one on his mettle, and she electrified and held the table. Perhaps, indeed, no orator has ever spoken more eloquently than this woman who was

all unconsciously throwing down the gauntlet to a youth she held in contempt, but who, solely out of his youth, had the power to wound her. . . . Her voice was clear and ringing, her eyes sparkled, her laughter rippled. And all the time, while conscious of her splendor, she was feeling that the old idea of the last spurt of the candle might express her, that hereafter, if she were claimed at all, it must be by crowds, that her place to shine would be at tables, in her box at the opera, or with the aid of splendid furs in motor cars. She saw herself as a far distant object to her own youth as well as to that of others, saw herself as detached from vital joys, something at whose clinging interest in life young girls marvelled. She remembered a woman like herself, a relative, whom she had regarded in just such a way at the age of eighteen.

She was attacked suddenly by a feeling of hurry as though there was something immediate for her to do, a kind of revenge for her to pursue quickly. What? A bewildering moment and then she knew perfectly well, so well that she wanted to laugh. Her self-appointed task was to punish this youth seated on her left who had shown her these things. He should *have*—how his unconscious insolence burned!—his experience through her, and he would not forget it.

"To youth!" she exclaimed, lifting her glass and bending conspicuously forward to gaze into the young fellow's eyes. And then she turned merrily and with the wine producing within her an added recklessness she asked the table to drink to her toast.

Half an hour later Harry found her in the library alone, seated in the corner of a davenport, her head back and her eyes closed. She started as he bent forward and called her name.

"What is it, Elaine? You are as pale as a sheet."

"Why, dear old boy," she said, and smoothed his cheek with her hand, "I believe I am a bit tired."

"So am I, Elaine, a bit tired—tired of

loving you—of waiting for you—of—"

And then Virgie appeared in the doorway. He straightened and Elaine smiled a rather wan smile. She stood up as she saw the youth brushing excitedly past Virgie.

"Why, here you are, Mrs. Gilmore!" And quite ignoring both host and hostess, he sprang to her.

"The old chap was right," he whispered, bending forward to peer in her eyes, "it's just eleven, and the beach is all moonlight. Come along, will you?"

She was quite prepared for this, even to the wrap the maid had been summoned to bring and that lay beside her.

"Is this yours?" he asked, and with a nod from her flung it across his arm.

CHAPTER IV.

"Will you wear it?" he suggested as they reached the walk and the cool sea air came with a little rush to greet them.

"No," she answered, stepping lightly and with slight eagerness by his side. "I'd rather," and she laughed a bit, "be wrapped in sea salt!"

The pallor of her face had not fled, and he looked at her profile a bit awed by its exquisite classic outline, thinking that it resembled a cameo more than flesh and blood.

"Say," he said, bending to her to take her arm and arrest what seemed to him a kind of flight, "you are beautiful, Mrs. Gilmore! Do you remember a certain evening on a beach—this kind of night, you know, with my governor?"

She stopped and looked up at him, into the commonplace face—a boy, she supposed irrelevantly, who looked like his mother—at this instrument of torture that Nature had selected to deal her a blow, a boy who had insulted her with as much sang-froid as he would dine a chorus girl, and who was as unconscious of the act as the cutting wind of blighting a flower.

She wrested her arm from what seemed to her rather thick fingers. She had the feeling that he might ribaldly

devour her, as a right, simply because he was young and she—old! And his unconsciousness of anything monstrous, insulting—that was the only word—only made the situation more grotesque.

"Will you tell me," she asked finally, "your governor's name?"

"Why, don't you know?" and he laughed that boyish laugh. "Don't you really know who I am?"

"I do not—I know absolutely nothing about you, except that you wear trousers and drove me from the station!"

"Oh! I say, that's rubbing it in a bit, isn't it? Why, I'm Lanny Sylvester! Now you understand, don't you?"

She paused, facing him, and looked hard in his face. "You aren't a bit like your father!" she said thoughtfully.

"No, I am like my mother; my sister, who is a beauty, is after *his* pattern!"

She made no reply, and they walked on in silence until they stood side by side on the moonlit beach, where the water was coming in with the indifference of an over-fed cat lapping up its milk. Above them the moon had taken possession of the sky and put out the stars.

She let him put the wrap about her and, seating herself, drew her knees up to her chin, wrapped her arms about them and looked out upon the sea. Presently she turned a bit fiercely to him.

"I'd like to take you by the hand," she said, pointing to the moon track as she spoke, "and walk to the end of that silvery road, and *in!*"

"You *would?*" Lanny laughed. "Well, I wouldn't. The beach will do for me! I hope you're not going in for gloomy thoughts, are you? I hope you're going to let me in for all there is in a woman like you—a woman who has lived and knows it all! You are, aren't you? Of course, I may appear a bit fresh to you, but I'm not, you know, and I know *you*—the governor told me all about you! 'Tell her,' he used to say, 'that I want her to take you in hand, and she'll be game!' The governor told me everything, Mrs. Gil-

more! 'I'm a dying man,' he used to say, 'and you're a gentleman, or you will be some day, so what does it matter, and the one thing I'll take to heaven or hell with me will be the memory of the first time I pressed my lips to Elaine Gilmore's. From that hour, boy,' he used to say, 'I knew all that a kiss meant!' You will kiss me, Mrs. Gilmore, won't you? Say," and he caught her by the shoulders, "you will, won't you? I'm just starting out, you see, and I want to learn. It's horrible to be a greenhorn in such things! I've been reading an awfully jolly book about love being an art, and that's what I feel you know about—the art of love!" She pushed him from her. "Oh! I say, you're not cross with me! You're not going to make me feel like a brute, are you now?"

"My dear young friend," said Elaine, "I don't care what you feel like; I just wish you would go away—go back to the house and leave me here alone! That's *all* I ask of you!"

"But why? What have I done? You're not angry with me, are you? Tell me, will you?—what have I done?"

"I can tell you that," she murmured indifferently, "you've just been yourself!"

"Well, that's nothing; every fellow must be himself. We've got to have individuality, haven't we? Say, by the way! I want to show you something—something I want you to accept from me, if you will!"

He slipped his forefinger and thumb in his vest pocket and brought forth a large unset diamond. "The governor got it in Brazil—it has a story attached to it—you'll let me have it set for you, won't you? I've been keeping it for some girl, you know. It's really a splendid thing. Look at it, won't you? But girls—well, they don't value such things. It's women like you who value diamonds; they help carry you off! Now I want you to have this one! We'll go to Tiffany's together and select the setting! Say! Why do you stare at me like that? Your eyes hurt a fellow! God, what eyes they are!

Only they look awfully tired! You aren't ill, are you?" And he bent his face to hers so that she felt the warmth of it. "I'm going to have a kiss now. I must, you know. Oh, you can't push me off; I'm a pretty strong chap!" And he kissed her a rude, unskillful kiss, but a sure one.

"By God," he said, facing her with a new look in his face, "you can do what you like with me for the next six months, Mrs. Gilmore! I'll cut out all *thought* of girls if *you* say the word!"

It was all so monstrous, these wholly unconscious insults that he was offering her, that she could find no words of resentment to meet them. The kiss! She assumed a bantering tone.

"You are sure?" she asked.

"Sure as I am of my life!" he flashed back. "And you will accept the diamond, won't you?"

"I'll think about that later! You are really quite sure that you are in love with me?"

"Oh, I say, Mrs. Gilmore, what's love got to do with it? That's just what the governor warned me against—falling in love! I'm going to do as he told me—keep my head and go in for *my* experiences with women with my eyes open!"

"I see," she said and looked a long while in the face that held nothing for her at all. "I see," she repeated. And then he thought she appeared to wake up as she laid a hand on his arm. "You're rather an advanced young chap," she said archly. "I'll have to think about having you on my hands! Now I tell you what I want you to do!"

"I'll do anything you say!" he answered fervently.

"Well, I want you to take that kiss as the first lesson in your experience and go away and leave me here a while. You see, it's the first lesson in love I ever knowingly gave, and I want to think about it!"

He broke into a loud, doubtful laugh that seemed to hit the waters in front of her, and then peered mischievously at her. "*You!*" he exclaimed.

"Yes, I! Look here, Mr. Youth,"

she returned impatiently, "I want you to go!" And she flung out her arms as though a bit suffocated. "Will you?"

"No, I won't," he answered hotly. "What do you take me for?—a kid you can order around? I don't take *that* any more from the mater! You're a beautiful woman, Mrs. Gilmore, and I'm a man, and the summer is ahead of us!"

"Yes, I know it's a wonderful combination, and all the weather prophets say it's going to be a wonderful summer, but you'll go now and leave me a while, won't you?" She felt terribly wearied, as though further argument would exhaust her. The boy seemed to sense this.

"Why, I've *got* to if you say so; only I want to tell you how stunning you were at dinner; how nobody could tease *me* out of being seen at *your* heels. It's just what I want, you know. I'll be proud of it, and it will give me an awful lift, I know! I tell you what I'll do! I'll leave you if you really wish me to—I know this, as the jokers say," he laughed, "was kind of sudden—if you will let me take you in my arms and give you a real sweet kiss this time, will you?"

"No, not to-night," answered Elaine with the voice and manner of a convalescent, "and you *must* go now!"

"But you won't back out? By the way! My car will be here in the morning. What do you say to a long ride—lunch at a roadhouse—that kind of thing?"

"Perhaps."

"And I can't have that kiss? Somehow I kind of feel I flunked on the first one. I want to make *you* happy, too! Oh, I'm not one of your selfish brutes—not I! I thought at dinner to-night, while you had everybody hanging on your words, I'd like to die for a glorious woman like you! I would really, you know! You'll kiss me good-night, won't you?"

"No!"

"But you'll motor with me in the morning?"

"Perhaps." She put out her hand. "Good-night, Mr. Youth," she said.

He got up to his knees, took the beautiful hands in his rather clumsy ones, and pressed his lips to them. "I don't like to leave you here alone this way!" he said solicitously.

"Don't you?" She was smiling the wan smile at him.

"No! I like you better than when we started out! I thought you were different, you know! By God, Mrs. Gilmore, I *have* lost my head! I'm in love with you!"

"Are you? Good-night!"

"Good-night, Mrs. Gilmore!"

CHAPTER V

AN hour later, when she mounted the porch, she found him seated in a large wicker rocker smoking a cigarette. He got up with a rush and came towards her.

"I've been sitting here all this time watching, you know," he said, and she knew how perfectly and wholly unconscious he had been of offering, from his standpoint, the slightest offence.

She refused to be detained, however, but stood a moment in the light of the doorway to give him a cruel smile that would seal his infatuation. For even though poor Lanny had offended unconsciously, his punishment was to be none the less severe.

"And yet, it isn't him at all," she thought, as, having reached her room, she walked over, quite from habit, took her old familiar position at the window and fixed her eyes on the heavens for which she had such a passion. They had suddenly changed and the moon had a distracted look, as it seemed to flee from the bony fingers of ragged clouds keeping up to tear at it. She liked that kind of sky, and it somehow seemed to match her mood. *She* had shone and been quite tranquil this evening, and then wholly unexpectedly things had torn at her just this way, and made her want to flee.

And then, with a little bitter look about the mouth, she began to think

about Lanny's father and wondered vaguely if that was how *he* had regarded her—as an experience. But a satisfying light pervaded her, bringing its reflection to her eyes, and a beautiful smile to her lips.

"Ah, no," she breathed, "that was—why, it must be eight years ago!—when this of to-night could never have happened!"

She felt a bit excited as she realized the piling up of years, and then her brow contracted in deep thought. He, this boy's father, had loved her only too well, and laid all the wonders of a man's sincere passion at her feet. But somehow it had ended bitterly—"all love affairs," a sharp woman had once said to her, "began with the dessert and ended with olives." The last words Lanny's father had spoken to her had been bitter words. "I may not get even with you, Elaine, for all I have suffered through you"—that was just before the end, when he sent for her to come to see him at Atlantic City—"but Time will do it for me!"

"Well," she gave her shoulders a shrug, "you were right, Arnold, and I wonder if you knew you would furnish Time with a weapon?"

She thought she heard a sound at this moment and turned just in time to see a little white something slipped under her door.

She went over quickly and picked it up, at the same time touching a button that lit the room.

The note ran:

Goodnight once more! Sleep well and have beautiful dreams. And you won't flunk, will you?

Your Boy.

She stood for quite a while, the note between her fingers, her body slightly bent forward, her eyes as upon another.

It had brought, with his sense of recognition that beautiful dreams belonged to her, a feeling of relief. Somehow it seemed quite to adjust things and take out the sting. She found herself a little later dismissing him quite pleasantly. The boy's ardor,

she tossed off, was simply to be living—living his youth, and quite generously. With her eye upon Virgie's wonderful bed—one of Virgie's fads—she conceded him this right. She felt comfortable—a bit sleepy, in fact, and indifferent. If she entertained a clear thought while undressing it was that she had no intention of motoring about in broad daylight to fetch up at road-houses.

Suddenly she paused. "Maybe, though," she said aloud, "I might!" As a matter of fact, she fell to thinking now: "I haven't the faintest idea what I am going to do about or with him—the morning must decide!"

She laughed lightly as though she found the idea of putting everything on the morning quite pleasing.

Before going to bed, clothed in a lace and beribboned silk nightgown, she switched on an amber light and took a long look at herself in a full-length mirror. . . .

The morning did decide. It brought her a forwarded letter from Prince Lubomiski. . . .

CHAPTER VI

"Isn't the day glorious?" Virgie asked of her as they met after breakfast on the veranda that, in accordance with Virgie's ideas, was as spacious as that of a summer hotel.

"It is. And what a magnificent place you have, Virgie! I like it much better than the old one. Your floral display is simply gorgeous!"

"You like all that red? I do too! If you keep the blue of the ocean in your mind, the effect is entrancing!"

"You're a constant surprise to me, Virgie, managing a great establishment like this, and not a false note from wallpaper to flower, servant to kitchen utensils! How do you do it?"

"Inherited, my dear! My ancestors," and Virgie laughed her practical laugh, "ran hotels!"

They were quiet after this, standing, girl fashion, with their arms about each other's waists, looking out. From

where they stood they could see the ocean, flooded with an unnatural light, more like electricity than sunshine. The sea itself—this according to Elaine—was like a mammoth ballroom floor of dark-blue marble sprinkled with diamond dust.

"It's breathlessly beautiful," she finally exclaimed, "and how ravishingly sweet the breeze is! I smell honeysuckle! Where is it? Isn't it all wonderful to be living, Virgie? If there weren't any disturbing elements," she laughed—"men, I mean—why, this world *would* be a paradise!"

"You wouldn't want to remain in it very long," laughed Virgie.

"You *think* so!" and she sneered. "Do you want to know the truth?—I'm sick and tired of them—just as tired as the card player is of the old, soiled pack of cards lying on the table. He knows he's going to forget his fatigue in the game when it's on, but he has that sick feeling all the same. I've lived it all, Virgie," she went on, "beside burying the loveliest husband a woman ever had! I wonder why I married Everett, Virgie," she asked thoughtfully, "knowing he was a consumptive! I knew perfectly well he couldn't live very long. He told me, and so did the doctors. It certainly wasn't for the poor little fortune he had to leave me—I didn't need it! It was an unreal kind of thing, beautiful in a way, and full of horrors at the end. Do you know how long ago it was? Seventeen years!"

"I know it," said Virgie, who looked rather pretty with a slanting ray of sunlight across her hair.

"And," said Elaine, giving her shoulders a slight shrug, "it's been fast and loose with me ever since!"

They took two rockers after this, and Virgie began working on her embroidery.

"I let them beautifully alone," she said presently.

"And, Virgie, I can't let them alone! I don't like them—upon my word I don't—it's just purely and simply an exciting game with me!"

"I know that, Elaine," answered Vir-

gie calmly as she looked squarely at her friend with her round blue eyes, that always suggested to Elaine cretonnes and decorations. "It's the one thing I don't like about you—it's the one discordant note"—Virgie was thinking of Harry—"the one thing you don't seem fitted to!"

"And yet I am," Elaine answered, her eyes on an English sparrow that had settled on the railing. "It's the only thing I *am* fitted for!"

"And you are going to keep it up, I suppose?"

"I suppose so! Have you any song-birds about here?"

"Harry says he heard a mockingbird the other day, but I don't believe him. The motors have run them all to the backwoods, I imagine. What do you think of Lanny Sylvester?" Virgie's head was to one side in close scrutiny of a forget-me-not rapidly growing under her fingers.

"Now don't ask me that—*please!*"

"Why not? He was awfully put out that you wouldn't ride with him this morning. Wanted me to plead with you and all that. Of course, I had better sense. Might"—and she looked at her—"interfere, you know, with one of your moves of the game."

"Not at all; I simply didn't care to go. Leave *this*," and Elaine spread her arms, "to be bounced about in a car with *that* chap?"

"Don't be sarcastic, Virgie. What do you suppose that poor, innocent, misguided youth has in his head?"

Virgie gave another look from her very blue eyes with their baby stare. "You?"

"Not exactly, no!"

"What?"

"Why, my dear girl, *love*, I suppose I might say in the abstract! Fancy! He considers love a *pleasant* experience—that all he has to do to thoroughly enjoy himself, and not only that, find himself equipped for life, is to fall in love—"

"With you?"

"And if I have the least interest in him, which probably I haven't, it would

be to show him the other side—that love to one who has studied it—an old-timer like me"—Virgie thought Elaine's laugh a bit nervous—"is pretty much like an ocean voyage over rough seas. I suppose I look about as inviting to him as the superb ship I first crossed in looked to me *before* it got started. That's the great big mistake of youth—imagining love a *pleasant* experience!"

"It is pleasant, isn't it," asked Virgie—"real love?"

"But then I am *not* real love, Virgie!"

"No, I know that."

There was a pause, during which many motors sped by in the distance, and Virgie's black cat, with four white feet—Virgie called him Four-leaf Clover and attributed to him all her good luck—walked through.

Elaine broke the silence with "I say, Virgie!"

"Yes, dear?"

"I had a note from Prince Lubomiski this morning."

"You *did!*" Virgie nearly leaped to her feet.

Elaine read Virgie's mind, but she liked to put things nicely—do her work, as she often reminded herself, as an artist. So she said: "And I want you to do me a favor."

"What, Elaine?" Virgie's voice was quite sharp. "*You* don't have to ask *me* to do you a favor!"

"I want you to invite the Prince here for a few days. *Your* place is one a prince would enjoy—well, hanging out in a while!"

"Why, Elaine," cried Virgie, who always concluded things before they had fairly begun, "I'll give him the violet-and-buff room. And you had better write your telegram at once to go when we send for the noon mail! I must go and give instructions!"

Elaine watched Virgie's well-fed yet still shapely form as it vanished through the screen door and then thought idly: "Dear old Virgie! She's been wanting a title inside her fine walls ever since I can remember. I'm glad I can fix it for her. And now to plan my own

campaign! Your first, or rather second lesson, my young friend, will be a kind of moving-picture show, with me for heroine and Prince Lubomiski for hero. If I am not mistaken it will lead you into some experiences that *will* rather fit you for life!"

The game was on. . . .

CHAPTER VII

ELAINE succeeded in warding off an encounter with the boy, who, to show his superiority and work off his pent-up irritability, went horseback riding in the afternoon with Harry and Virgie. She passed the time dwelling upon the arrival of the Prince, of which arrival she entertained no doubt, and amusing herself with Virgie's guests.

There was quite an offering, among them a small man, with a charmingly gentle face, who wore glasses, called himself Uncle Jimmy, affected the perfectly natural, and told very interesting stories, some especially apt Southern ones, as he had just returned from Alabama. Uncle Jimmy spoke a good deal of his "cabin" in the Berkshires, but never failed to refer to its antique furnishings with rather pained expression, as though such possessions were a misdemeanor, and finally showed a camera picture of a very splendid castle.

Then there was Mrs. Kiddington Browne, whom everyone took for a Russian—she carried it off so well—who actually spoke with a foreign accent, never forgetting it, and who couldn't condemn the Kaiser because personally he had always been so "perfectly lovely" to her. She told a good many stories of the Kaiser and his family in a slow, drawing voice that carried conviction. Then there was the little lady of pigeon shape, florid face, much black lace and many diamonds worn morning, noon and night, who talked constantly of "Mr. Tompson"—her husband—confessed to their numerous "rows," declared her joy at being away from him, and spent the better part of her time writing him letters and watching for the mail. She

focused attention upon herself by her constant accusation of stolen letters, which Virgie declared actually made her guests, as well as herself and Harry—to say nothing of the servants—feel quite guilty.

When Elaine asked Virgie why on earth she had such a person, or such persons—there were several objectionable ones, one so silent as to appear deaf and dumb, another with ostentatious gray hair, apparently proclaiming her only excuse for existence, and still another whose costumes, and especially her very large lace fans, apparently appeared to have done service in the Ark—Virgie informed her that they were her "fillers" and quite arrogantly added that she found them *very* useful.

As little Rose Trevelyan, who had a wealth of curly hair and a face that was a composite of Mary Fuller's and Mary Pickford's, made a picture of herself in a white wicker chair beneath a white and scarlet striped awning that protected the sunny end of the porch, Elaine decided that she, at least, was not a "filler" and that the Prince need not be called upon to entertain *all* of Virgie's guests—that she would dole out his consideration of them as *she* saw fit!

At five o'clock she received a wire from him that he would arrive in time for dinner. . . . It was then that Elaine decided finally upon the course to pursue with Rose and retired to her room. There she took a bath, had the rose shades drawn, and fell asleep.

Elaine, while seeing to it that she would look her best at dinner, was, as a matter of fact—to her credit—rather shrinking from the rôle she had decided to play. It was a cruel one and she made no bones of admitting it. She had, however, gotten through cruel rôles before and had consoled herself that to be cruel was, after all, god-like. God, she affirmed—and, be it said with considerable justification—was *always* cruel! If He did nothing else but allow people to grow old, He established Himself to be a cruel God. If man was made in His image, Elaine rea-

soned well—and necessarily women too—mankind must be cruel.

That was why she sent for the Prince. With his aid she certainly *could* give Lanny some lessons! These lessons—at any rate, they would begin thus—would be a kind of series of absent treatments, within, however, the range of his eye. As an onlooker of her maneuvers for his benefit, he would forget himself in going quite mad about her. A flirtation—as well call it that—actually with him, that he would go about as one took up five-finger exercises, would tax her patience. It would be as though she had been requested to go to a kindergarten and draw on a slate for the benefit of some child who believed he was a great artist. All this confused thinking filled her mind as she contemplated through him the very thing that he had demanded for himself of her—a new experience.

She watched him ride up between Virgie and Harry, as pleased at his display of horsemanship, and really greatly improved appearance through the aid of riding togs, as though he were some object of art that she had purchased, been extremely doubtful about, and that might be, after all, worth while.

"He is a male," she thought, "who can never appear at his best in evening clothes. In that, how unlike his father! This young hopeful must always, to do at all, be dressed for"—she paused—"tennis, golfing, boating, horses—and, yes, in winter he would carry off furs and caps, especially if he grew"—and she thought he might—"a bit taller."

Elaine half regretted that it would be impossible for him to "go broke" for her, as others had, but there were other things for her to break for him—his self-assurance, his audacity, his *youth*—she could destroy that!

For just one instant she drew back from this. That note he had written the night before was his youth, and it seemed to her almost too beautiful a thing—it was such buoyant, unconscious youth—to destroy.

She spread out her hands and looked at them as though it were they that

would perform this dastardly deed. And then she felt a bit ashamed and cowardly, and walked about the room airily humming a tune. . . .

CHAPTER VIII

THE "man," meanwhile, was standing in his room in his shirt-sleeves, tearing up another note that he had written her—tearing it up almost ferociously and throwing it down.

It had been a hard day for him, because inexplicable. He hadn't understood *why* she wouldn't motor with him, *why* she wouldn't allow him to catch her eyes at lunch, *why* he had gone riding—he feared he had brought the blood from his mare with his spur—nor *why* she had passed him so disdainfully in the hall, amazed that he should try to stop her.

"And," he said thoughtfully, "in that short skirt and blue worsted turban she looked like a little girl! I want to talk to her—she isn't a bit like what I fancied—she's so tremendously sweet—I want to be near her all the time! By Jove, I wonder if she's offended that I put that note under her door. I shouldn't have done that! I'll have to apologize!"

He rang for his man.

"Go and find out if Mrs. Gilmore will see me a few moments in the library!"

He walked up and down, over to the window-pane and thumped on it, kept in motion generally while awaiting his answer.

"Mrs. Gilmore is asleep, sir, the maid said—she can't disturb her."

"All right, Albert. Order my car and send word to Mrs. Lenox I won't be back for dinner. No, wait a moment! Turn on a bath for me. Hang it all, Albert, I believe I'll go home tomorrow. I think I'll join Mr. Aldridge in the Adirondacks!"

"Very well, sir!"

"Asleep!" he thought, as the servant retired. "She must look a perfect angel when she sleeps! I'd give everything I possess on this earth to sit by the side of her bed and watch her! I'd

sell my soul for such a half hour! I'd—what's the matter with me! Is *this* keeping my head? The governor was right! 'She'll make you forget age, Lanny—forget everything but her!' The trouble is I wasn't prepared for her. I thought she was different—one of these modern Cleopatras, with burning eyes and things on her that jingled! And she is just sweet—sweeter than any little child I ever saw! Why, that's just what she is—a child—she makes me feel old! I want to take care of her—that feeling came when I saw her standing in that little blue turban—just hold her close to me, make her feel safe, and I want to put my lips to hers—God! I know *how* to kiss her now. What a damned brute I was last night—"

"Mrs. Lenox wants to know if you will take Miss Trevelyan out to the stables, sir? There is a new colt she wants to see!"

"Miss Trevelyan!" exclaimed Lanny. "Why, you just say to Mrs. Lenox, Albert, that I'm lying down—not dressed. Tell her I'm awfully sorry and hope she'll excuse me! No, wait a moment, Albert. Why, just tell Mrs. Lenox certainly I'll be right down, and come back and get me ready!"

"Yes, sir."

Ten minutes later Lanny was standing under a cold shower, and a little later still he was escorting Rose Trevelyan to the stables.

"I'm just crazy," Rose was saying, "about all young things, and when I heard about the little colt coming last night, I had to see it! Are you fond of horses?"

"Of course," Lanny answered absently; "a man must have his stables, you know!"

Rose said "Of course" to this, but, with a sidelong glance at Lanny, decided not to speak another word until they reached the stables. . . . Lanny wasn't a man, in Rose's estimation, who would stand too much chatter. Somehow, she was a little afraid of Lanny.

When they passed a rosebush about to flower, however, she couldn't help

telling him how she liked the little buds. Lanny did not reply.

CHAPTER IX

ELAINE found the Prince—a man as admirably suited to evening clothes as Lanny was not—just as a prince should be found: standing at twilight beside one of Virgie's fine fluted columns smoking a cigarette and looking calmly out on the ocean.

"This is a very different scene," said Elaine after their greetings, "from the last time we met. Do you remember?" Her head was slightly tilted as she looked up at him. . . . She had donned her evening gown and was looking exceedingly lovely in white.

"Perfectly," the Prince smiled, and very graciously extended through the smile flattering memories.

"It was a wonderful sleigh ride!" Elaine, while coloring slightly, returned. "I will never forget it!"

"Nor will I, Elaine!"

He tossed his cigarette over the railing and turned to her. "I have not seen you in six months," he said in a low voice. "I wonder if you have experienced, as I have, a sense of wasted time?"

His English was perfect, with just sufficient accent to render his speech musical, sufficiently different to proclaim his foreign birth, to delightfully keep in mind that he was the Prince, and his eyes, as everyone admitted, spoke.

They were very beautiful eyes. It would, in fact, be difficult to conceive of a more charmingly fashioned individual. Tall, of course, well formed, of course, with a body that could not move except gracefully, dark hair that curled slightly, lusterless complexion with its accompanying dead-gold tinge—the beautiful gray eyes declaring him both seer and poet, the red lips one expects of a prince, the white teeth one hopes for, a suggestion of baldness that in no way encroached upon the brow, and, as a final declaration, the soft yet closely trimmed Vandyke.

He was so perfectly as he should be, looked so perfectly as he should look, and spoke so perfectly as he should speak, that he might, from the social point of view, be designated the almost perfect man.

One might concede naturally that he may once have been young, but he appeared rather to represent time than years—a part of eternity. He suggested always having been just as he was to-day, nor could one imagine him as being affected by the passage of years. He carried with him a velvety accuracy of deportment that charmed irresistibly, even against the will. He was an instrument so well attuned that he preserved harmony in all weathers. To his inferiors he was almost tenderly polite. While he appeared impassioned, an expression of passion, he gave no evidence of any interest in his emotional nature. A love affair with this man was surely a thing to be attained. That Elaine had thus attained proclaimed her worthy of honors as well as passions.

The Prince probably appreciated Elaine as no one else had or could. In his eyes her faults, so delicately indulged in, were what constituted her interest for him. They were both *blasé*. He had plans, to a certain extent on this account, concerning her. He was pondering upon these plans when she joined him. The charming appearance she presented advanced their culmination.

When they were well on in their light conversation he began to politely raise objections to certain of her premises.

"What you say, Elaine, dear, is all too true, but there is no imagination here, no living the thing through thought. It's always ever an existence through action. I prefer the underlying—to have the thought and feeling of a country presented to me as a subconscious offering. I do not find that offering here. I find nothing offered—it's all barter, from a smile to an invitation. I have already been considering"—and the Prince indulged in his slow smile—"what I am to do to repay

your friend, Mrs. Lenox, for being here. That is to me a very tiresome way to look at things. This house of hers that your graciousness has led me to is superb, splendid, but it is barren, lacking in charm—it offers comfort, that is true, but no ecstasy. I have no doubt that an elaborate dinner awaits us, but it will be only elaborate; no mystery as to the dishes served. I would like to take you to Turkey, where it is a crime to offer one the same dish twice, and where mystery is served to you in flavors. And India? Have you read *Loti*? But you have, of course! He has felt for us what is there and expressed it. How long," and he fixed upon her an appreciative gaze, "will you, with your finer sensibilities, deny yourself these things, the finer life? How soon will you be ready for what I have to offer you?"

"You forget," Elaine answered dreamily, "that I am a part of it all here!"

"I do not, nor does it detract from you! But you are also a part of very much more! You have had this. Go with me into lands unknown to you—into the unknown realms of love as yet undreamed of by you. Do you know," and he bent to her a face suddenly transfigured, "why yours is the country of divorces? Your men are providers, but not lovers! Is it not time that you of all women actually knew the poetry of love?"

For a flash Elaine thought of Lanny's diamond, but not disdainfully: it aroused within her a kind of pity. From the Prince's standpoint Lanny had offered himself through his diamond, and there was a kind of pathos in it for its inefficiency. He had begged her to teach him, and here was the Prince begging her to be taught. It was a bit absurd in a way. Somehow the boy's unset diamond, though, carried more conviction than the Prince's so finely set words. The most she could see in him was what Lanny had seen in her—an experience. Besides, the Prince could not teach her quite as much as he supposed. She had spent

a good many years in Europe. The memory of an Italian, also of high rank, came up. As she looked into his face somewhat wearily, forcing her charm upon him, the blue-gray eyes took on their tired look.

"Are you asking me, Sergius," she asked in a low voice, "to be your wife or your mistress?"

"Either, my dear, that you prefer. I can make you princess solely of my heart, or of my realm and my heart. It is as *you* desire. We are both a bit jaded—an added charm in you for me—it would seem to me that we are ready, both of us, for one great storm of the emotions, and then the restfulness of a long, placid summer together with lesser storms to keep our vision clear, and the joy will be in seeing them grow less frequent, less violent. Finally—the peace of a stretch of fair days—then—" and with a gesture half tragic, half indifferent, the Prince wiped them both off the earth.

His eyes were in hers—hers on the scarlet of his lips. Lanny's horrible kiss caused a shudder to pass over her.

"Elaine!" The Prince's voice was a whisper, a beautiful hush, it seemed to her, and the lips that breathed it called to her like the bouquet of rare old wines. A vineyard that she remembered as a part of the Italian's love swept before her vision. Her eyelids felt heavy and began to droop, and then Virgie appeared, calling to her rather stridently.

"Elaine, dear, *have* you seen Four-leaf Clover? He has not shown up for his supper!"

"No," said Elaine, a bit startled, but recovering herself.

"And"—Virgie had reached them—"I feel perfectly wretched about it, Prince! Whenever he disappears in this way he stays out all night, and it *always* brings me bad luck the next day!"

"Who is Four-leaf Clover—your son?" inquired the Prince solicitously.

"My son!"

"Mrs. Lenox has no children,

Prince," said Elaine; "she means her cat!"

"Yes, Prince," exclaimed Virgie, "with four white feet! I mind his staying out all night much more than I do Harry—my husband! Harry, at any rate, *says* where he has been, and his being out doesn't bring me bad luck! Shall we go in? I believe we are going to have dinner some time, and Harry insists upon poisoning us with one of his specials! My husband is a born mixer of drinks, Prince! I tell him that if he fails in his business he can run a saloon!" and she laughed.

As they passed into the spacious lounge the lights were flashed on.

The boy standing in the center, necessarily in his evening clothes, was not at all at his best. His hair, when he came in hatless on horseback, was dry, crisp and curly. He looked quite boyishly handsome, Elaine had thought. But now! Elaine said "Ye gods!" as though he had himself destroyed all his hopes! He had plastered it to his head, and the freshness of his shave gave him the shiny look of a plaster-of-paris doll. She passed him unnoticed.

Lanny sprang after her, and at the door of the dining-room forgot himself and caught her by the dress. It was the gesture of a moment of spasmodic anguish. She glanced with feigned surprise over her shoulder at the face he stupidly made plain to be manly, and then quite naturally they were all seated at table, she, as luck—or Virgie—would have it, between her two admirers.

CHAPTER X

"WHAT are you trying to do?" asked the boy when they had all strolled to the veranda for coffee and cigarettes, "torture me?"

They were seated in front of a little table—the coffee was being served—and he was striking away at an obstinate match for her cigarette.

Said Elaine as she leaned back in her chair: "I am doing what you asked me to."

He laughed rather harshly. "Are

you? Why, you haven't done the first thing I asked you to!"

"But I have, my dear boy, in my own way. I am teaching you what you wanted me to!"

"By keeping away from me?"

"Exactly!"

"And you call that teaching me?"

"I do—I certainly do!" and Elaine laughed a pretty laugh.

"It's not *my* way!" he exclaimed. "You've made me crazy to-day, Mrs. Gilmore! I pretty nearly flunked! I almost made up my mind to go away to-morrow—go up to the Adirondacks and fish and forget you!"

"That would not have been original!"

"You don't suppose I am trying to be original, do you? What for? I don't want to be original," and he leaned over and caught her wrist. "I've gone simply mad about you! You'll go to the beach with me a while, won't you? You'll cut all this out and go with me? Say! You don't know how cruel you've been to-day! I've suffered, Mrs. Gilmore! It's all so quick, you know—my falling in love with you—I never dreamed of such a thing! It's just like a man being shot and toppled over before he knows it. Why, I just can't stand it!"

"Why do you plaster your hair back that way?" asked Elaine.

"I don't know. What's that got to do with it? The fellows all do!"

"The Prince doesn't!"

"I hope, Mrs. Gilmore"—and even in the dim light she could see his eyes flash—"you're not going to compare me with that ass!"

"Oh, the Prince is not an ass, Mr. Sylvester!"

"He is in *my* eyes! All these foreigners are, with their affectations. What we American fellows want to be is men!"

"And what we American women want," breathed Elaine sensuously, "is lovers!"

"Well, I want to be your lover, don't I?" inquired the youth a bit madly. "Isn't that what I tried to make plain to you last night? Didn't I tell you I

didn't give a rap about your age and that kind of thing!"

Elaine laughed in his face, and Lanny, in this moment, had the fire of an assassin in his eyes. But at the instant the Prince strolled up and extended a very beautiful gold cigarette case with, if it could have been distinguished, his crest set in diamonds and rubies.

"Have one of these, Mrs. Gilmore," he said; "I brought them from Russia."

It was also extended to Lanny, who angrily contrasted it with his Tiffany silver one, and his own especial cigarette of Virginia cured tobacco—the kind his class preferred. It was an affront to our young hero, but a more poignant one was to follow. The Prince, looking anything but an ass, maintained his position in front of the little table. Being, after all, a youth well grounded in manners from his infancy, Lanny felt called upon to offer the Prince his chair.

It was declined by the Prince, who politely inquired if he might bring forward another, which he did. And while Lanny did regard all Europeans, and especially princes—as to whose principles and honesty he also entertained doubts—as asses, he was nevertheless, and even in spite of a jealousy that burned like fire, a bit self-flattered that the Prince was thus seated so near him. It seemed to Lanny, in spite of his jealousy, it was his part to help entertain the stranger. And so he, and he it said for Lanny, deferentially, inquired of the Prince concerning a recent newspaper interview as to certain adventures in Hindostan.

"Are you interested," the Prince inquired, "in Hindostan?"

And Lanny could not recall a more kindly interest than the Prince bestowed upon him. As he certainly was not interested in Hindostan, he promptly lied by declaring that he was and that very much so.

"Then I shall be very pleased to talk at length with you some time on the subject."

Elaine kept passionately still and en-

joyed the Prince's cigarette. Her heart dictated that were it necessary to come to the rescue of Lanny—her young pupil—she should most certainly do so, but her heart did not figure—was not allowed to dictate—whenever she had a game on. So she really was considering the delights of a rare cigarette—not at all like Virginia tobacco—while she vaguely recalled the Prince's twilight proposal, and considered even more vaguely what cruelty she might enforce upon ardent Mr. Sylvester as a part of his education in love. She was not unmindful of her pose, nor did she fail to send in the direction of the youth magnetic waves from hands that she kept gently and disturbingly in motion.

"Really, Prince," she heard her young hopeful remarking, "I would be indebted for any information. While, of course, I know a lot of things, I had to cram so for my examinations they don't"—and Lanny laughed his boyish but now slightly embarrassed laugh—"come out very often as clearly as they might. We chaps over here, you know, receive the kind of classical education that can be squeezed in between football, baseball, rowing, athletics—that kind of thing. I was the champion high jumper of my college, but I am awfully anxious to know about European life and education. My governor wanted to have me go to Heidelberg, but when he passed over the mater wanted me by her, so I flunked. Do you go in much for athletics over there?"

"We do, yes," smiled the Prince graciously. "One of the first requirements of a gentleman in Europe is that of self-defense. We are taught swordsmanship and wrestling, but these accomplishments are made subservient to the cultivation of the mind. We are first of all grounded in Greek, Latin, Sanskrit and Hebrew."

"I guess," said Lanny, with his boyish laugh, "it's the other way with us—brawn and muscle first, and brain second. Isn't it so, Mrs. Gilmore?" he asked, beginning to feel the need of her

as well as the restlessness those magnetic currents were inflicting.

"I was over at the Prince's estates," smiled Elaine languidly, and looking not at him, but at the Prince. "He," and she focused upon Lanny now, "has been telling me wonderful things of the placid content that reigns there."

"It's good enough for me here at home," the boy exclaimed hotly. "My dreams are right here!" And it was only too evident then and there to the Prince that they lay in Mrs. Gilmore's eyes. He smiled. The boy caught the smile. It gave his heart a wrench that brought the blood to his face and Mrs. Gilmore registered a lesson that had advanced her pupil. She was about to set her seal upon it when they were interrupted by the appearance of one of the guests.

"You are going to the beach with me, aren't you?" whispered Lanny, rising and bending over the back of her chair. But she arose without answering, and, with a glance at the Prince, walked away with him. . . .

CHAPTER XI

"MRS. LENOX has a lovely pergola," Elaine said, as they reached the steps; "the flowers covering it don't look a bit as though they were paid to grow! Shall we go there?"

"By all means." The Prince glanced back. "But what of my hostess?"

"Oh, she is playing bridge by now; she's a fiend, you know. She won't miss even you!" And Elaine laughed prettily.

"Your ladies play bridge," returned the Prince laconically, "and your men tell stories. The first, yes, that one can understand, but the latter—this passion for telling stories, of the Irish or the Chinese and those interminable Hebrew ones! It supplies conversation of a kind incomprehensible!"

They entered the pergola and seated themselves on a bench in front of an old stone table that Virgie had imported from a garden on the Rhine.

It was at dinner that Elaine had de-

cided upon this place to receive from the Prince a kiss to follow upon the black coffee and cigarettes. It was not to too immediately follow. First, the night, with all its warm wonder—it was warm; even the short walk had brought a slight moisture to her brow—must penetrate her; her mind must dwell upon her stars, upon the quiet sea, sound asleep and stirring ever so lightly with its dreams of tides; upon the seaweed she so passionately admired, and the vanished blue of the sky. The Prince must feel her thoughts and suppressed emotions about these things, and climax them by a touch of his dark, slender fingers, perhaps lightly upon her throat, and those red, beautifully chiseled lips upon hers. . . .

They talked quite a while, and as they talked Lanny sat alone in the chair Elaine had vacated, and thought and suffered. From within an occasional laugh or exclamation of exultation reached him, and when they did not, he could hear faintly the low-lapping of the waves upon the shore. The Prince's cigarette had left a strange and unfamiliar odor upon his fingers. It almost sickened him, and with it came revolt, fierce and strong, that this man, in his estimation silent-footed and subtle as an Indian, had come upon them and stolen his woman.

"God!" he whispered, "how beautiful she is! I can't live without her! I'll die if I can't have her!" And he saw himself in the home he had made for her, dictating to her; saw her obeying him, doing what *he* said! Now he was watching her as she dressed. He saw a splendid bed—a bed like his mother's, where he could watch her asleep, or torture her by his love into wakefulness. He dwelt upon this idea that he could torture her as now she was torturing him.

He took out his watch and, striking a silent match, looked at it. A quarter to ten. One hour and a quarter and the hour would come, the same as the night before when he was alone with her on the beach—alone with her and strangely near. Why, last night he had

kissed her! He was amazed at this—it seemed incredible, and, also, it seemed a long, long time ago. Could it be possible it was only last night!

Where was she? Where had she gone with that—adventurer? What did she know about him? He would go and find her—his place was to protect the woman he loved!

He was about to spring up when Rose came out of the house and stood in the shaft of light that lay like a path from the door to the steps. The sight of her terrified him. She had told him when they parted that she would see him after dinner. . . . She was no doubt looking him up to keep her word. He tried to bury himself in his chair. . . . She was a beautiful girl, a debutante that the papers had printed pictures of and made a fuss over, but the thought of a conversation with her filled with with horror.

She might rave over the colt again, and tell him all about her love for kittens, and little newly hatched chickens, how beautiful the little gold ducks and geese were, how she adored anything young, that it was a passion with her! About her mother's illness, and how she had graduated as a trained nurse just to nurse her!

The girl had appeared—he had been running across her quite frequently recently—a bit gone on him. But lots of girls were that, or pretended to be—Lanny was wealthy and knew himself a catch—and it didn't bother him. But now everything that came between him and his anguishing thoughts of Elaine bothered him. It was a relief to him when she missed scent and walked to the farther end of the porch, where she could look out on the ocean. It was his chance to steal away and he did so, taking the end steps and slipping around the house out of sight.

Not far off was the pergola where Elaine was seated at the old stone table with the Prince. A searchlight that he had observed while seated on the porch fell upon it with each turn. His eyes followed it and, quickly as it passed over it, he divined that he spied the

white dress of Elaine behind the vines.

Lanny had no more idea of playing eavesdropper to the scene than he had of springing upon them with a pistol. Such a thought could never have entered his frank young brain. His intention was to go forward boldly, enter and claim her for the promise—he convinced himself that she had promised—to walk to the beach.

But a few feet from the entrance his step was arrested. The searchlight swung over and showed him Elaine about to take from the Prince the kiss she had ripened her lips for. . . .

It took one instant for Lanny to revive not only all the fairy tales he had read of wicked princes, but all the true stories he had read of their treachery to his countrywomen.

With a leap he was upon the Prince, applying impolite epithets, as he tore him from the embrace of Elaine and attempted with all his college reputation for strength to fell him to the ground.

With an active turn and a *ju-jitsu* twist the Prince had his youthful assailant back downwards across the table. Lanny never forgot the look of the Prince as he stood over him thus, or the light dusting of his fingers as he released him.

"My dear young friend," he asked, when Lanny had himself upon his feet, "did you take me for a burglar?"

Lanny's answer was a dazed, bewildered stare. . . .

Slightly back of the Prince stood Elaine, white as the dress she wore, her head lifted, her nostrils slightly parted, and on her beautiful lips, robbed of their feast, a sneer.

"Come with me!" said the boy, his brain still reeling. And he half staggered up to her. "Come along, will you?" And he caught up her hand.

"I'm afraid, Mr. Sylvester," Elaine answered coldly, as she freed herself, "the wine at dinner must have gone to your head. I shall warn Mr. Lenox to look after you. Come, Prince!"

Then she went out with the Prince and left the boy beside the old stone

table, with the wistaria, that was both sad and unbusiness-like, hanging over his head in curls.

A little way off they could hear his passionate sobs. They were very passionate sobs, with his strong young arms, that had proven so worthless, on the table, and his head, with his hair plastered to make him appear manly, upon them.

"There is something," said the Prince in a low voice, "so infinitely pathetic in the first love of a youth. Why do you amuse yourself at this poor boy's expense?"

"As a matter of fact," flashed Elaine, "he was as insolent with me on first meeting as he has just been with you! I am teaching him a lesson!"

"I do not consider him insolent, but impetuous rather. Your lesson was to have him fall a victim to your charms, is that it? If so, you have not failed as a teacher! The youth is quite mad to-night!"

"By the time," answered Elaine, and striking, as she did not often do, a false note, "I am through with him," and she laughed, "he will be!"

The Prince looked at her lovely profile, wondering once more, as he had so often done, at women of her peculiar type.

"For some reason," he said, "he interests me; he is so typically an expression of what he feels it fine to represent. Have you known him long?"

"Only since yesterday. I knew his father some years ago. It seems before he died he talked a great deal of me."

"Fired the boy's imagination concerning you, perhaps?"

"Perhaps so."

They had reached the edge of the lawn and, with Virgie's round and square patches of flowers at their backs, had paused.

They stood thus for some minutes. Elaine broke the silence.

"It is moonlight on the beach after eleven," she said in a low voice, "and the sands are like silver."

"I will make a silver pillow for your head, Elaine."

CHAPTER XII

It was past twelve when Elaine with her Prince came stealthily, with Four-leaf Clover, looking as guilty as either of them, at their heels, towards the porch.

The boy was seated in the square chair he had occupied the night before, no cigarette now, watching for them.

He saw them come languidly up the steps, saw them pause, saw the Prince give his final gaze, saw him raise Elaine's beautiful hand to his lips, and then saw her glide from him into the house.

The Prince took a pipe from his pocket and, having filled and lit it, came towards Lanny, bent evidently upon pacing, ship-like, the porch before turning in.

The boy felt afraid—ashamed rather—and all his misery and humiliation crowded upon him anew. When the Prince reached him he paused.

"Ah!" he said, "it is you! This is a pleasure!" And he took a vacant chair. "Rather interesting, your taking me for a burglar, wasn't it?"

"Rather," Lanny answered in a weak voice.

"My education in *ju-jitsu* alone protected me. You are very strong."

"I didn't seem so," said the boy sullenly.

"Oh, mine was a trick. I am afraid, after all, it's the trick in life that counts—tricks in sport, in war, in love—everything!"

"I don't like tricks," answered the youth, with a bit more energy.

"Youth never does," the Prince replied; "only age knows their value. Only the lover who has mastered love's tricks is really successful."

"Then I will never be a successful lover!"

"There is a horrible story by Maxim Gorky," went on the Prince, ignoring this, "in which—you may have read it—a married couple of the peasant class entertain, after a somewhat prolonged relationship of the senses, the most violent hatred for each other. In the end

they come to blows. After each of these encounters, with their accompanying bruises and bloodshed, they return to their love-making—this due invariably to the woman's renewed abandonment to her passion for him. The man, brutal in other things, was no doubt an artist in love."

"We over here," said the boy, still sullenly and recalling their encounter, "*protect the women we love!*"

"Protect and serve that is true, and yet on all hands I observe tears in the eyes of sweethearts and discontent in the hearts of wives. I doubt, my friend, if women, after all, care for protection, service, or even respect from us. It is claimed that they are moved by our heroism, bravery, successful undertakings. A woman—and it has always been thus—is moved by but one thing—our love. For that she has never failed to sacrifice all else, the greatest hero, or best husband—even her children! We judge women by the feelings our own passion for them awakens, and that is a great mistake. We over-estimate women!"

"Don't you respect women, Prince?" And the youth's eyes flashed in the gloom.

"Not very much, because I have not found it pleasing to them. Women resent respect—it is too cold for them. I have never associated a woman with anything as practical as respect, and were I called upon to decide which to offer the ordinary woman to keep her regard, respect or light trifling, I would undoubtedly offer the latter."

"That was why," said Lanny fiercely—and the Prince inwardly applauded his astuteness—"I took you for a burglar to-night—that was what I felt!"

"And," answered the Prince, "offended the lady. By the way," he went on indifferently, "it must appear to you very silly to see two old people like Mrs. Gilmore and me sentimentalizing in bowers and on beaches in the moonlight, doesn't it?"

The Prince, who had grasped the situation perfectly, was bent upon helping

this "fine young fellow," as he called him, to himself. He knew Elaine—all the cruel machinations she was capable of, all her charm as well, and while it was those very things that attracted him, they seemed to him so in vain in the present instance, so useless. He liked this lad!

"Mrs. Gilmore is not old!" answered Lanny, flaring up; "she will never be old!"

"No? Experienced then! She is an actress who has played many parts, overshadowed and caused suffering to many carefully selected leading men."

They were interrupted by Harry Lenox dashing out and up to them.

"Ah! here you are, Prince! Come in and have a nightcap before turning in. Have you met Uncle Jimmy? He is telling us some capital stories! Come along, Sylvester!"

The Prince, fresh from the moonlit beach with Elaine, fairer in his arms than any Undine the gods might have washed there, felt a shrinking from Uncle Jimmy's fine stories. He couldn't stand American story-telling. Of all things American, it was the one thing he could *not* stand. So he excused himself, went his way to his chamber, while poor Lanny entered with his host and did what any self-respecting American youth violently in love and violently unhappy would do: he drank, for him, rather heavily.

CHAPTER XIII

ONE of the most beautiful things about Nature is the manner in which she goes on with her work entirely independent of people. Neither the sun nor the clouds nor the rains consider them in the least. And so, with every single soul in the house looking forward to a splendid day, with motors, horses, boats, golf links and tennis courts in mind, each according to his bent, morning seemed scarcely to dawn at all, and all they could actually see from their windows was a violent downpour of rain. With an accompanying rather cold wind coming in all

directions, even the verandas were unavailable.

Breakfast over, Virgie's splendid apartments might have been likened to the waiting-rooms of a railroad station. Virgie did all she could by way of turning on things—lights, pianolas, musical machines—and by arranging bridge parties, while Harry sought to keep things going by declaring the rain couldn't get into the decanters. But a rainy day is, after all, in the country, a somewhat dismal time, and on every face rested blankness or fatigue.

Elaine decided that as the Prince had disappeared, the most exciting thing to do was to torture Lanny. He had been dogging her footsteps persistently, and, what was more telling still, the pretty light brown, curly hair was not plastered.

"Are you going to continue to follow me around?" she asked, seating herself in the corner of a large davenport and looking tantalizingly up at him.

"Yes," and he took his seat beside her and laid his hand heavily over hers, "I am."

She freed it. "Just like a detective?" she smiled.

"Just like a detective, yes, until I land you—until you are mine! And you needn't laugh at me, either; I'm going to have you—you've got to marry me—marry me, do you understand!"

"You *must* permit me to laugh!" Elaine returned.

"You can, yes! That can't affect me, though—nothing can! Do you know what that man told me last night—that Prince of yours?"

"Oh, he isn't mine!"

"Well, you want him to be—don't you?"

She was intentionally and provocatively silent.

"That's it—I knew it! You want him to be—and let me tell you this! He's playing fast and loose with you; I know it! He hasn't any respect for you—he told me so! He hasn't any respect for any woman! That's what I felt last night when I went in there to choke the life out of him—that he

wasn't respecting you—that he was just one of those lying, deceiving foreign tricksters—and he admitted it! He's trying to trick you—you, the woman I love!" And Lanny caught her hand in a very fierce grasp.

Virgie had gathered her bridge friends in the card-room; most of the men were playing billiards; the Prince was in his room reading. For the past few seconds they had had the room, the library, a splendid cathedral-like place, to themselves. The boy's voice was not raised, however, but low and tense, and he had forgotten his "you know" and his college vernacular; he wasn't asking her now not to "flunk." He was in love with her—that was all he knew or cared to know. And it wasn't any trifling matter with him, either; it was all seriousness. He was ready to die for her or see her die rather than that she should evade him.

Every now and then his eyes fell on the doorway, anxiously, feverishly, and mentally he was saying to himself that if that foreigner appeared and swung up to them with that insolent grace of his, he would stand up and bar the way for him. That was all, and his mind was quite made up.

All the while the Prince was glancing up from his page to think of this youth and how he could wrest him from the cruelty of a dangerously fascinating woman unconsciously bent upon his unhappiness, if not his destruction.

"There must be some way," he said, "in which I can open his eyes."

But Lanny did not know this. He knew but one thing—this woman, pale and slender, yet strong and full, who wore a violet dress, relieved by a string of coral beads, and who was backed by a gray, driving sheet of rain.

"And three days ago," she said, looking at him through half-amused eyes that caught the violet reflection of her dress, "you had never seen me!"

"You're mistaken; I had seen you—you had been pointed out to me. But don't forget this: I had seen you in my mind a thousand times, lived in visions of you that the governor painted on my

brain, lived to meet you and have an experience with you! I don't want any experience now—I want *you*, and what I want I'm going to have!"

"When?" idly inquired Elaine.

"Now!"

Elaine began to be a bit bored by this direct, youthful enthusiasm. She was feeling piqued, too, that the Prince should keep to his room. Why? She gave her attention to this, Lanny's words really having made little more impression on her than one of Virgie's records. They were as old as "Hear Me, Norma."

"I wonder," she asked, rising, lifting her arms and stretching herself, "if it's going to rain *all* day! Let's go out in it!"

"In the rain?"

"Yes; don't you ever do that kind of thing? Let's take a boat and row about the lake with it coming down on us!"

"Very well," said the youth grimly; "if that's what you want to do!"

"In our bathing things," said Elaine, and began prattling like a child. "We'll cover up in our raincoats and slip out! Will you?"

"You don't have to ask me 'Will you?'" said Lanny, whose eyes were shining. "I'd go to hell with you if you wanted me to go there!" And he caught her wrist, giving her arms a twist.

She paled from the hurt and sudden anger. "You are terribly rough, Mr. Youth. I haven't forgiven you for insulting the Prince, either!"

"Nor I you for letting him kiss you! You did, didn't you?"

He was still hurting her, but she bore it, half-closed her eyes as in remembrance and admission, and smiled at him. And thus they stood a moment like wrestlers. Finally he let her go, and she stepped back from him with a defiant gesture.

"Tell me," exclaimed Lanny, "did you let him kiss you at the beach? I went through hell last night! I don't know how I kept from following you! I had to hold on to the arms of my chair—I'm pretty desperate, Mrs. Gil-

more! I don't know *what* it is! It's just as though I had gone mad! I suppose it's foolish and all that, but if the whole world told me so it wouldn't affect me! And I tell you right now I'm not going to live through what I did last night again! I can't! I can't stand it!"

"You're perfectly absurd," said Elaine. "You ask me to be your instructress in love and then undertake to tell me how I shall instruct you! I saw you last night outside there watching—"

He bent over her furiously. "I *wasn't* watching!" he breathed.

"Oh, yes, you were! I knew it, and I thought what an excellent opportunity to give you a lesson! That, to gratify and enlighten you, was my sole reason for granting the kiss to the Prince! You chose to interrupt my lesson, rather than profit by it! You silly boy, didn't you say you wanted to learn about love—wanted me to give you lessons?"

He was perfectly conscious of the banter and sophistry of this chatter, but not conscious that every word she spoke and every gesture she assumed was to baffle and enchain him. He made no answer, but she held his eyes quite a while and then she smiled.

"Are those curls for me?" she asked. "They are pretty! Come here," and she led him back to the davenport, pulling him down beside her. "Let me see if they are real curls," she said, and slipped her fingers through them. "Go now, get ready and meet me on the porch!" she exclaimed, and pushing him off.

The boy staggered as he walked out of the room. . . . But before he reached the door a grim resolve had taken shape in his mind. . . .

Elaine noticed, when he had disappeared, that it had stopped raining; that a pale light had spread over the room.

"By the time we get there, though," she said, "it will be coming down again in torrents!"

The Prince, in more faith of the blue patch of sky—"big enough for a pair

of pants"—had decided upon a horseback ride before lunch. . . .

CHAPTER XIV

"It's going to pour!" said Lanny, as he bent forward to untie the boat.

"I don't care, do you? Wouldn't it be fun if Byron's line could come true, that every drop that fell rose from the earth as a serpent? How would you like that?"

"Not at all!" said Lanny, pushing the boat out.

"I would! I want something to happen!"

"Maybe something will!" answered the boy in a tone that caused her to look at him.

He had thrown his mackintosh in the boat, and in his blue bathing-suit, with his straight, strong limbs, his well-formed torso, and the light curls topping a not over-classic but sufficiently well-formed head, he might have been said to be handsome.

Elaine thought this, and, softened by her environment, for a brief second she contemplated the youth's future—what it might all be holding for him when she had become to him a dream. His immediate present was herself, and but for a certain irritating longing for the Prince, as one desires a withheld cigarette, she would have enjoyed the present moment. The heavily overcast heavens, the absence of people—just this mournful-looking lake, distressed trees, with a sound of an angry ocean not too far away pounding the shores—fascinated her.

"Get in," said Lanny; "better keep your coat on. The air will be chill."

A dull roar of thunder made them look in its direction and the boy repeated: "It's going to pour."

They got in the boat then, she looking puritanical and demure in the pale gray raincoat that reached to her feet. As she took her seat in the stern, Lanny balanced his oars and looked at her. There was something beautiful in his eyes for just a moment—something that

spoke of hope. But it changed as he gripped the oars and began to row.

The day was by now like night, the thunder rumbling in the distance, with occasional flashes of lightning like the winkings of some great and over-bright eye.

"Are you going to promise to marry me, Mrs. Gilmore?"

"No, you silly boy!" and she laughed.

It was not an unpleasant laugh, simply natural—the laugh of a woman still feeling the supreme joy of feminine power. Apart from the morning of disappointment—for from the instant she saw the rain she had planned to spend the forenoon in the library with the Prince—she was really in the mood to thoroughly enjoy herself. The Prince was only a pleasure delayed. Out in this boat, with the dark, tragic day, a bit sorrowful and emotional, she was momentarily quite happy. If only Lanny would row in silence, be simply her oarsman, and let her glide about in this mystical gloom, with that wonderful sky making distant music, changing its robes and flashing strange lights!

"Are you going to promise to marry me?" the boy asked again.

"No, you silly boy!" she repeated quite carelessly.

She was positively provoked at his interruption of her enjoyment of part that she had come out for. She bent forward with an expression of displeasure purposely accentuated.

"I may as well end all this nonsense," she said, "by telling you that in all probability I shall marry the Prince."

At this moment the rain began to fall in large, direct streams, rebounding from the water in shoots that caused all appearance of water about them to vanish. It was as if they were ploughing through a silvery wheat field. The boy's face was white, set and grim.

They rowed for quite a distance in silence, and then suddenly Elaine called out to him: "You mustn't go there! There is a very deep hole!"

"I know it!"

"But it's dangerous!" Her voice was a bit of a scream. "You can't control the current!"

"I know it!" the youth again answered, and surprised her by a laugh.

"It may overturn the boat, though!"

"I know it—that's why I'm going there! If the water doesn't overturn us, I'll help!"

"Have you gone mad?" cried Elaine, suddenly as white as a corpse.

"Yes!" called Lanny above the deafening roar of a burst of thunder. "Do you promise to marry me?"

"No, of course not! You're absurd!"

The boat began to turn around and she nearly fell over. "My God!" she screamed, "look where you are going!"

"I am looking! I'm going to turn us over in this hole!"

The thunder was incessant now, the lightning following on every clap. She hid her eyes to shut out the blinding light and her danger. The boat was whirling around like a top, and as she opened her eyes she saw Lanny stand up and throw the oars into the water.

It was then that Elaine screamed; it was then, also, that the Prince, who had been deceived by that momentary patch of light sky that had put the library for Elaine in a pale light, heard the scream. . . .

His eyes—and what more natural?—followed the direction of the scream, and with a sharp cut on the foreflank of his horse, the Prince dashed straight into the lake and up—necessitating a few yards of swimming on the part of his horse—to the sinking woman and irate youth. . . .

CHAPTER XV

"It isn't at all what the Prince saw, or what the Prince said," exclaimed Virgie a couple of hours later; "but that he happened to have, quite madly, of course, gone *riding*! Otherwise—" and the tragic uplifting of Virgie's hands, with their ornately ringed fingers, fixed the attention of her assembled guests, now happily rejoicing in a sunshiny corner of the veranda, entirely unsug-

gestive of it ever having rained since the flood.

They were all, with the exception of the three stars of the morning's drama, present about her. Uncle Jimmy was there, in rather Scottish-looking attire; Mrs. Lushing was there, with the bareness she delighted in diaphanously covered; Mrs. Kiddington Browne was there, indulging more than ever her foreign accent; Mrs. Tompson, miserably shrunken from the effect of stolen letters, was there; little Rose was there, pathetically lovely and pale as a young girl should be after a tragedy that had very nearly robbed her of the object of her emotions; Harry was there beside a formidable black bottle from which all—that is, except Rose, who had in hand a cup of bouillon—had been forced—three fingers was Harry's limit in deference to the occasion—to drink freely. Virgie's "fillers" were also there.

"And," went on Virgie, "I predicted it—predicted *something*—when Four-leaf Clover elected to stay out!"

"Oh, come now, Virgie," exclaimed Harry, a trifle irritably; "you're not going to shoulder the whole thing on that poor old cat, are you? And, besides, he was in! Wilkins assures me he put him out of the library window this morning at seven!"

"My dear Harry, *you* will end by putting it on the Prince, if you don't put that bottle away!"

"I've been so upset," said Mrs. Tompson, "I haven't inquired about the mail!"

And then the Prince, freshly costumed, after his drenching, in a suit of white flannels, appeared in the doorway and all screamed.

"Come along, Prince," exclaimed Harry, distinctly declaring himself host, "and tell us about the whole wretched business!"

It was just here that the Prince, having advanced with an unruffled countenance, and with, also, the graceful manner that had so offended Lanny, did a very nice thing, or rather repeated a very nice thing. He, just as a prince

should do, lied. The whole thing, according to the Prince, was an accident—wholly unavoidable. Had he not seen it all?

Not even a "filler" manifested the doubt that all, and especially Virgie, maintained.

Virgie knew Elaine! Elaine was lovely—no one doubted that—Elaine was her friend, as Virgie had several times affirmed since the accident; but *also*—and Virgie had emphasized it for her own benefit—Elaine was never happy unless she had some man doing some mad or silly thing on her account. She had never hesitated to express her disapproval of this trait in Elaine, nor to affirm that she never could see how any woman could want another man when she had had—as Elaine had, although many years before—a husband. One man, for a lifetime, was enough for her! This was certainly true, as Virgie was madly infatuated with Harry, and not altogether, either, without cause. Nobody had ever denied that Harry was not only a success financially, but a fascinating man. It was Harry who continued to speak.

"The Prince is now going to tell us," he affirmed, "just what *did* happen!"

The Prince gave a not over-tragic account, in which the elements and Harry's lake were greatly criticized, almost denounced, and in which Mr. Lanny Sylvester, that charming and heroic young chap, was very highly praised.

"I've been sitting up with him in his room," he finished up—"a few bruises and a slight cut—he is terribly afraid that the blood alarmed you—across the brow; but nothing serious, and he has assured me he will sleep the afternoon away and be down for dinner. I hope you can give as good an account of Mrs. Gilmore, Mrs. Lenox?"

"Oh, Elaine! She is very nervous, of course—who wouldn't be?—but she hasn't a scratch. She vows you took a handful of her hair, though, Prince! And I warrant we shall all see her at dinner, too!"

"But in the meantime," exclaimed

Harry, "for the Lord's sake let us have some lunch! Somehow the whole thing has given me a ferocious appetite!"

Virgie glanced at Harry's bottle, but, as she was never so happy as when Harry fed voraciously, said nothing.

Just here the figure of the butler in the doorway appeared to produce a quieting, soothing effect, and the entire party went his way.

"Are you sure," asked Rose, bringing up the rear with the Prince, "that he is not hurt?"

With her question the Prince made a satisfying discovery. The upturned eyes that met his so anxiously were filled with tears.

The Prince could not recall when the tears of a young girl's beautiful eyes had ever affected him more pleasantly. He decided to keep them on tap.

"He has a bad cut," he answered tenderly to her, "but I do not believe it is serious. I am his self-appointed physician and should I require a nurse could you act as one?"

"I could!" exclaimed Rose, the tears overflowing her smooth, lovely cheeks as she clasped her fairy-like hands. "And I'm a very good nurse, too—a real one—I graduated!"

"I am sure of it," replied the Prince, and graciously touched her slender arm as he passed her through the door.

CHAPTER XVI

"You understand," said the Prince to Lanny, about five o'clock in the afternoon, "that it is quite an established fact that the whole thing was an accident—they all believe it—even Miss Trevelyan—she believes it, too!"

"Miss Trevelyan," said Lanny, planting an elbow and putting his cheek in his hand; "I don't care what she believes—I don't care what any of them believe!"

"But we must care what Miss Trevelyan believes—all of us must!"

"Why?" asked Lanny, surprised. "Why her?"

"Because"—and the Prince smiled very beautifully—"she is the only young person in the party. In a way, you know, we should all look after her feelings. Don't you think so?"

"She's not so very much younger than I am," Lanny answered; "only two years!"

"You're a man," answered the Prince gravely.

Lanny was no doubt impressed by this compliment, but he answered rather bitterly: "I wouldn't be anything if you hadn't interfered, and I wish you hadn't—I wish you hadn't done it—I wish you had let us both drown as I intended!"

"You really were trying to drown Mrs. Gilmore, then?"

"I was," Lanny answered in a tone of voice that caused the Prince to fear he would end it with "sure I was." Lanny didn't, of course.

"It would have been worse," smiled the Prince, "if you had tried to drown Miss Trevelyan."

"Why do you keep bringing *her* up?"

"I am afraid because I am rather impressed by her. I had a long talk with her after luncheon. She told me a good deal about herself. Her history is rather pathetic, and then I found her so exquisitely lovely—really, a very beautiful girl—yes," and the Prince looked very thoughtful. "I am afraid I am very much impressed."

Lanny looked dubious as he studied the Prince's face. But the Prince was a good actor.

"Do you respect *her*?" demanded the boy, still peering at him.

"Respect?" asked the Prince, as though it were an English word he had not learned.

"Yes, *respect*," and Lanny's face flushed. "You respect *her*, don't you, even if you don't respect any woman!"

It was a very charming moment for the Prince. The day had remained fair; through the open windows came a light breeze; Virgie had sent up lots of flowers to the "hero" and numerous magazines and weeklies that Lanny

hadn't looked at, but that decorated the bed where he had flung them about.

"I am afraid if I were to see very much of her," he answered, "I would grow confused as to what I feel for her. Besides," and the Prince became quite ardent, "Miss Trevelyan isn't a woman, that is, not quite. She is that something, very much sweeter, that wonderful something that precedes a woman—a young girl. When I was about your age I was quite mad about a young girl Miss Trevelyan somewhat resembles—it may be the stirring of old memories."

"Why didn't you marry her?" asked Lanny, induced to manifest a child's interest.

"Ah!" and the Prince sighed deeply. "You really would care to know? I was on the verge of doing so, or rather of asking her to consent, when one night, at a ball, I met for the first time a beautiful Polish countess. Strange," interjected the Prince as though surprised by another memory, "but Mrs. Gilmore resembles her. She was not young, not by any means, perhaps quite as old as Mrs. Gilmore is to-day, but she was an artist as to her appearance, and could make herself irresistibly charming—just as Mrs. Gilmore can. She fascinated me—I was blinded by her. To my inexperienced eye she represented what my youth was in search of—love. I sacrificed the lovely girl for her—I abandoned myself to her fascinations for all of which she laughed in my face! Since," said the Prince arousing himself as from a bitter memory, "you have admitted that I saved your life, will you grant me a favor?"

"Yes," said Lanny, "of course!"

"Tell me, why did you try to drown Mrs. Gilmore?"

Lanny sat up in bed. "Perhaps," he said, "because *she* had laughed in my face!"

"I see." The Prince rose. "You are sure there is nothing I can do for you?"

"Yes, I'm quite all right! I suppose I haven't half thanked you, though,"

he added reluctantly, "for saving my life?"

"You can really better do that, my friend, twenty years from now, when you see what the years have brought you. I hope," and Lanny was treated to one of the Prince's most beautiful smiles, "it will be happiness!"

"I'm not looking for happiness," Lanny exclaimed, as though suddenly remembering everything, "nothing but misery stares *me* in the face; I'm a heart-broken man and I don't care what the future holds for me! This is all I want!" and Lanny took from the pocket of the jacket of his rose-colored pajamas a picture of Elaine that he had taken from among Virgie's collection of photographs.

"And what on earth," asked the Prince, re-seating himself and studying the picture, "do you want with her?"

"The same perhaps that *you* do!" Lanny flashed, and betraying a sudden rise of angry jealousy.

"But that would not be possible! I want her for my wife!"

"Why shouldn't I," asked Lanny, looking every inch a man, "want her for a wife, too?"

It was the derisive look that the Prince appeared to be attempting to conceal that penetrated like a sword-cut, and that was not soon to heal. Lanny saw himself through that look, not only in the eyes of the Prince, but before the world. His boyish face colored.

"I can't see, Prince," he exclaimed, "what you want with her; why you should, with your views, want to marry any woman!"

"Shall I tell you," asked the Prince bending forward. "Shall I tell you why I want to marry and why I want her? It is because," and the Prince smiled, "she is well-seasoned, well-flavored with all the extracts of life. She is complex, lacking in constancy, unchild-like, and yet full of sympathy for the universe. She is the only woman of my acquaintance who has lived and yet not tired of life. The only thing that she has tired of is men, and to make

them serve her purpose, she peppers them. She can never pepper me because I am already peppered. I want her, on account of certain qualities of mind and temperament she possesses, to ascend with me to the summit of life we are both nearing, and when we have neared it to rest with me. I am tired of the world but fear loneliness. She is tired of men but would never be content to live without one at her heels. We can be companions because of the consciousness we each possess of having lived our lives to the limit—of having exhausted what we went forth to explore. As we are no longer in search of experiments we shall not be subjected to disillusion and disappointments. We can put aside the excitements of life and live placidly, pleasantly, in a sense, philosophically. Already in possession of what youth can only learn through sorrow and bitterness, we—

"My dear Lanny," exclaimed Virgie, rushing in quite violently—Virgie was the intimate friend of Lanny's mother—"it's no use! I took your note myself—I pleaded, I said what you told me to say—that she owed it to you—I said everything I could possibly think of on my own account, and she is positively obdurate—she will not see you!"

As the Prince with a lifted finger at her glided from the room, Lanny sprang forward. "But I'm going to see her!" he exclaimed.

"My dear boy," said Virgie, who was especially resentful to Lanny for interfering with the afternoon bridge, "I positively cannot have any more scenes. You've nearly drowned the woman, so what more do you want! Do you know it's all over the Hotel, and that a *Herald* reporter has already been! Nobody believes one word of it being an accident. The butcher's boy saw the whole thing; you can't expect to keep him quiet, nor can you expect the Prince to go on the stump denying it for you, can you now? What you did was simply shocking—shocking and you don't seem to see it! I'm very angry with you, Lansing! The idea of

your falling in love with Mrs. Gilmore! It's perfectly absurd with all of your prospects talking of marrying a woman old enough to be your mother! Do you want to make of yourself an object of ridicule? Why, after your one week of honeymoon Elaine would be a hump on your back and everybody laughing at you both! You are nothing but a boy, do you understand?—a boy! And, well, Elaine Gilmore is *not* an infant!"

"I don't care what she is!" cried Lanny. "I'm in love with her and I'm going to bend her to my will!"

"Love and will fiddlesticks! She is calmly dressing this moment to take the train to New York to avoid any more unpleasantness, *including* reporters, and you are going to dress *yourself* and be at the dinner table at eight o'clock!"

"I can't be at the dinner table," Lanny confessed desperately, "I haven't told it—but I think my ankle is sprained—it's swelling and I'm suffering like the devil, Mrs. Lenox! Please send her to me, won't you?"

"No, I'll send over to the hotel for the doctor for you, and as it isn't in my power to punish you, Lanny, I'm glad the Lord did it for me! I'm glad that at least you have a sprained ankle—you deserve it!"

And Virgie swept somewhat majestically from the room.

CHAPTER XVII

It was in this moment that Lanny experienced his youth to the fullest. He had in the eyes of this household disgraced himself; the woman he had been willing to renounce life for had turned from him in anger and disgust, and neither her anger nor her disgust could quell the madness of his desire for her presence. The poor boy's being was in tumult—he sat up in bed and put out his arms to the door in a wild prayer that this woman with her pale gold hair, half-tired eyes and form languorous from over-ripeness would appear just for him to look upon her.

Elaine, with emotions of thankfulness at finding herself still alive in the—she

glanced through her window—beautiful world she so loved, was standing before her dresser arranging a careful, if hurried, toilet for her departure. Her black and white taffeta had been decided upon as a match for her black turban with the white feathers, and her maid was standing by with the thick chiffon veil that Elaine considered a necessary adjunct to the situation.

"That boy!" she exclaimed under her breath as she half-snatched—a gesture most unusual to Elaine—the veil from the girl. "Well," she now mentally ejaculated, "we are both alive, the Prince is waiting to escort me out of it all, and it may do that young irrepressible good!"

And then with a message that the motor awaited her, and that Mrs. Lenox said there was barely time to catch the train, she ran to the window to look once more at the particular view it afforded, and carry with her the mental picture of a bird perched on the very top of her scraggly cedar. . . . Having made sure that she had the picture, she descended, made her exit through the pantry and met the smile of the Prince standing beside the car. . . .

From the station the Prince sent a note addressed to Lansing Sylvester, Esq. It ran:

Au revoir, my dear friend. I trust the morrow will find you quite yourself again. In parting may I make one small request?

I hear that Miss Trevelyan is to be your nurse for the night. May I ask that you will not look into her eyes. For a little while, at any rate, I wish to retain as my own all their gentle loveliness. Sincerely,
LUDOMISKI.

"Well!" said Lanny as he crumpled this note, very nearly making the hand that Elaine—Elaine was not always fair

—had designated pudgy, into a very manly young fist, "I guess I *will* look into her eyes!"

And Lanny did, every time she came near the bed or bent over him, he looked very squarely into them.

Lanny inwardly congratulated himself that by so doing he was getting even with the Prince for many things! Once when Rose bent over to arrange his pillow he even took her by the shoulders, and asked her to hold still so that—he told her he had a reason—he could look very deep into them.

And when she did and smiled, he looked at her hair, too, noting the strange combination of the red-gold with the black eyes. . . .

He mentioned it to her and when she gave her shoulders a little shake to free herself, Lanny very nearly became an awful traitor to himself, to his love, even to Elaine. . . . He almost—he was feverish and very wretched and helpless with all those bandages the doctor had put around his leg, that he wasn't to stand on for a week—asked her to kiss him. . . .

He didn't, though, because of Elaine's eyes calling a halt like the sudden and unexpected brake on a train that jolts one so horribly. It put Lanny in pain from his head to his feet. . . . He pushed Rose away from him.

But when it was past twelve, and she was seated at the window leaning against one corner of it in the moonlight, very sleepy but, also, very bravely as she had just said, "wide awake," as any nurse should be, he did ask her if she had seen the colt that day. . . .

And Rose answered yes, and that it had already grown some. . . .

And then everything was very still, and they both fell asleep. . . .



HOW TO LEARN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

By Harry Kemp

ONCE upon a time there was a certain Captain of Industry whose business had so many branch offices in Europe that he came to the conclusion that it would be a good thing to have as manager abroad a man who knew fluently at least five languages.

So he sent for two of his brightest aids, John and Arnold.

"I need," he explained, as they stood attentively before him in his private office, "I need a manager abroad who knows how to speak the continental languages. Also, I believe in competition. So I'm going to send both of you boys over to Europe and pay all your expenses for four years. At the end of that time I will select the one of you who knows foreign languages best."

The two young men set sail.

In the process of time the four years were soon up, and they again found themselves back in the New York office, before the Boss.

John had gone immediately to the University of Heidelberg and had there taken a four-year course in Italian, Spanish, French, German, Dutch, Swedish, Portuguese and Finnish. His linguistic knowledge proved enormous, his accent correct.

Arnold, who, on the other hand, was rather hazy as to where he had arrived at his knowledge, when he spoke in their respective languages, set every Frenchman gesticulating, every German grunting, and every Italian running around in circles of vociferous delight. And yet his accent was far from perfect.

Full of curiosity, the Captain of Industry had Arnold up on the carpet.

Arnold could carry on a conversation with anyone and wake them into animation.

John, on the other hand, with all his prodigious erudition, left everyone cold.

"Arnold," his employer asked him, "you went through no regular course of study . . . you were here, there, and everywhere. Then how did you gain, I won't say knowledge, but such power over the languages?"

"Oh," answered Arnold, "that's easy enough to explain—everywhere I went, I made love to the women."

Arnold got the job.

John resigned and became Professor of Modern Languages at a little freshwater college somewhere in the Middle West and was never heard of again.



WOMEN dream of being pursued by hordes of handsome men, and spend their days trying to ensnare one homely man.



THE WICKED MR. ATWOOD

By Thyra Samter Winslow

MR. ATWOOD, his whole name was George Elbers Atwood, came to New York on a week's vacation. Mr. Atwood (he was too formal even to be spoken of as Atwood or George; he signed his name G. Elbers Atwood and explained that Elbers was an old family name), was a polite young man who wore neatly brushed black clothes and neatly tied dark ties and clean, not too-high collars.

Mr. Atwood was a clerk in the First National Bank of Sprague, New York. He was twenty-three years old and had been in the bank since he was eighteen. He was always punctual. He applied himself to the various duties of bank clerkship with admirable thoroughness. He knew that, if he were careful and trustworthy, he would be given a raise every year or two and, if there were no bank officials' relatives or sons who sought banking as a profession, he might even rise to be the assistant cashier or even cashier, if things went well for fifteen or twenty years. Who could tell? Mr. Atwood was not without his ambitions.

For fifty weeks of each year Mr. Atwood worked in the First National, but for two weeks he was given a vacation—with pay. One of these weeks he spent in Sprague, reading old copies of the *Atlantic Monthly* and other gayer and less worthy publications that he had not quite got around to during the winter evenings and playing neat games of tennis in the court on the lot next to the church which he always attended on Sundays. He got up late and stayed up beyond his usual bedtime. The second week of his vacation, Mr. At-

wood always went to New York. During the rest of the year he spoke casually of "when I was in town last" and the month before he went and the month after he came back he liked to say things about "running up to the city." Sprague was nearly a night's ride from New York.

Mr. Atwood's people were respectable, well-thought-of York Staters. His two aunts, still unmarried, taught school, as did several of his cousins of both sexes. His sister was a teacher, too, and the young woman to whom he showed gracious but delicate attentions was even now attending summer school, preparatory to entering upon her scholastic duties from which, in a few years, Mr. Atwood hoped to relieve her by matrimony.

The year had passed slower than usual for Mr. Atwood and he had been looking forward to running up to the city. To be sure, it might be hot in the city and the real people, whom he liked to read about in the New York papers, might be out of town. But it was the only time he could get away, and New York, itself, would still be there. Something near romance stirred in Mr. Atwood's breast. Being in New York always seemed wicked, almost devilish. You couldn't tell what might happen. Why, you could stroll into a bar or into a café and order one drink after another without being seen by a single person you knew. Mr. Atwood, to do him justice, had never had more than two drinks at a time, but—the principle of the thing! Freedom, that's what New York stood for.

The week's vacation in Sprague had been uneventful. Miss Potter, the

young woman who received with calm hopes the attentions of Mr. Atwood, was at summer school in Syracuse. The other young people in Sprague were not enjoying their vacations just at this time.

So, when Monday came, Mr. Atwood gladly packed his neat leather suitcase, with the three foreign labels on it that his Auntie, who spent a summer abroad five years ago, had preserved for him. Determining to start right, he took a sleeper and arrived in New York late in the morning. He drove recklessly, in a taxi, to a Madison Avenue rooming house, where he always stayed. This was his fourth visit there. It had been recommended to him by Mrs. Burrell, the cousin of the minister. The landlady always pretended to remember him, which gave him a warm feeling. He liked to tell himself that getting back to New York was just like getting home.

He spent the first day walking around, passing the theatres and the cafés. Even the electric signs seemed friendly. It was warm and dusty, but he didn't even know it. That night he ate in a restaurant he had read about in a magazine that liked to write of such things and then went to a musical show where he obtained for one dollar a seat half way back in the first balcony. He thought it was a pretty good seat, too, for he could hear and see everything. He liked the show, and one or two jokes, off color, made him realize how wonderful it was to be back in town.

In four days he went to five shows, including roof gardens. He even went to a vaudeville one afternoon. He ate at six restaurants and many lunch rooms. He admired Fifth Avenue by day and Broadway by night. And then he got lonesome. He would never have admitted it in Sprague, where he would return with tales of sirens and songs, of costumes and cafés, of cabarets and colors, but he really got lonesome every year. For, during his week in New York, he hardly ever spoke to a single person, save to the landlady when he arrived and when he paid for

his week's lodging, to the waiters when he ordered and when he paid his checks (his tips were genteelly small), and to the boy from whom he bought newspapers.

This year, New York seemed lonelier than ever. He watched the pretty girls tripping down Broadway in too-high heeled, too-tight shoes. He watched the men who watched the girls. He wanted someone to talk to, someone to play around with. Saturday came, and Sunday morning at seven he was to leave for Sprague, his vacation over.

Saturday afternoon, as on previous afternoons, he walked down Broadway. It was a wonderful summer day, too warm, too bright, too dusty, but wonderful. The dust bits were gold dust. The heavy air was incense. It was New York, a lonesome New York, but New York just the same. And Mr. Atwood longed, longed for something wicked, romantic, to happen to him.

He walked along in his neatly brushed black suit, his thin, pale face eager with hope, his rather near-sighted eyes wide open. Girls passed, in groups and alone. How slender and piquant they looked! If he only knew one of them!

And then, just as he was wishing hardest, a girl smiled at him. She not only smiled, but she nodded her little green and white bonneted head.

Mr. Atwood's heart beat quicker. A girl had spoken to him on Broadway! He knew, the same instant she spoke, that, of course, she had made a mistake. He knew no one in New York, much less a slender, daintily gowned little thing like that. But he knew the correct thing to do. Oh, yes, in Sprague, if you are spoken to by mistake, by a member of the fairer sex, you speak back, so as not to embarrass her. Mr. Atwood remembered his Sprague training. He bowed to the girl. How he wished he knew her!

"Hello," said the girl. She wore a flaring coat of green with a skirt made of wide stripes of green and white, and,

in spite of the warm day, looked unbelievably cool.

"Some day, eh, Sammy?" she added.

Now Mr. Atwood knew that his name was not Sammy. He knew, too, that any instant the girl would realize her mistake and would, of course, leave him—alone—in New York—on his last day in town.

"Ah, it is a lovely day," he told her, and then—and he never could figure out how he did it, "now that you are here."

And this bold remark was accompanied by even a bolder thought. What harm would it do, his last day, to pretend that he did know this delectable young woman? Of course, if she found out that he was fooling her—but he would be very careful. It was wicked, of course—but, when one is twenty-three and only gets to the city once a year—what an adventure!

"My, you're right there with the jolly, aren't you?" said the girl.

"One—one can't help it, saying things like that to you, you know," answered Mr. Atwood. He was getting very proud of himself. "Where are you going, this beautiful day?"

"Just walking."

"May I—may I walk with you?" he asked timidly, but how wicked he felt! If she only knew that he didn't know her!

"Sure you can." The girl regarded him rather closely. Mr. Atwood colored under her stare. What if she found out that he was a stranger, after all? He wondered whom it was he resembled so closely. But she did not see that he was an impostor.

They walked for several blocks almost in silence. The girl admired some violets in a florist's window and Mr. Atwood offered to buy her some. She accepted rather indifferently. The violets and carnations that he had sent to Miss Potter, in Sprague, on birthdays and similar occasions, had cost only about one-fourth as much, but Mr. Atwood didn't mind the money. It was his last day in New York and he read the magazines! He knew romance

when he found it. Here he was—on Broadway—buying violets for a girl, and even her name was unknown to him!

He wanted to ask her but hesitated. Wouldn't that give him away? Wouldn't that reveal him as the wolf that he was, under his sheep's clothing of an old friend? Finally, he risked it.

"Do you know," he said, as she pinned on the violets, "I've forgotten your name?"

"Forgotten it?"

"Yes, you know I haven't seen you for such a long time—at least it seems a long time to me," another touch of gallantry, "and I can't think of it for the life of me."

Again the girl looked sharply at him and raised doubting eyebrows. Had she really ever seen this boob before, she wondered.

"So you've forgotten my name already, have you?" she asked. It was as good a way as any of making conversation.

"Why, yes. I don't seem able to think of it."

"Was it Ruby?" She had used Ruby last year, she remembered. She smiled.

Mr. Atwood had meant her last name, but the smile helped him.

"It isn't Ruby, is it?"

"No," and she giggled, "it isn't Ruby. That's my chum's name. Mine's—mine's Violet."

He had just bought her her name-flowers! He breathed contentment. Violet! More romance. He had never known a girl with that sort of name. His sister's name was Martha and Miss Potter's first name was Gertrude.

"I thought it was something like that," he said.

He wanted to ask her last name, but he was afraid that her suspicions really would be aroused then. So he called her "Miss Violet" instead, until a few minutes later, when she told him to "cut out the Miss part and get friendly."

After that he put her name into nearly every remark he made:

"Don't you like the shapes of the automobiles this year, Violet?" or:

"Yes, Violet, I think tall girls are awkward in short dresses. Little girls, your size, Violet, can wear them best of all."

He was pretty bad, calling a girl by her first name, in that reckless fashion. You didn't do that, in Sprague, unless you knew a girl for a good many years.

Then Violet suggested afternoon tea. Mr. Atwood had read about teas, of course, but he didn't know just where to go. Violet knew. She knew just the kind of a place he liked, ornate, elegant. The music was gay. The tables were nearly all full, yet each table seemed an oasis of friendliness. How much more friendly everyone looked than on previous days, when he had gone into restaurants alone. Violet seemed to know just what to do. She spoke to a waiter who recognized her and gave her a seat near the space cleared for dancing. Several others, two well-groomed girls, two or three sleek young men, nodded. To be with a popular New York girl!

They ordered drinks. Mr. Atwood had never had an intoxicant in the presence of ladies and when Violet ordered some drink he had never heard of he ordered lemonade.

"On the wagon?" asked Violet. Was there a sneer in her voice? The wicked Mr. Atwood changed his mind. He knew New York men drank a lot. He thought of beer, though he didn't like the bitter taste, looked around—and ordered a highball.

"Dance?" asked Violet. She was not a conversationalist, but her words were to the point. Mr. Atwood did dance and now he was very glad of it, indeed. He knew the new dances, for the Young People's Auxiliary of the church had a dance every first and third Saturday and he always attended. Some churches, of course, didn't believe in dancing, but his was different, quite modern, and the Y. P. A. meetings were very gay, in a nice way, of course.

So they danced. Violet led at first, until he found out how she wanted to

go and learned a few new little quirks. Then he did quite well. She snuggled quite close to him and smelt pleasantly of the violets and of other soft odors. Dancing, in the afternoon, at a tea dance, with a strange girl, in New York? Could anything be more exciting?

Then the dancers left and a different crowd began to take their places, more substantial-looking people, the men fatter, more mature, the women lacking the youthful charm of the dancers. Violet discovered she was hungry. It was nearly seven.

Mr. Atwood suggested dinner. He was all for ordering it right there, but Violet wouldn't agree to that. She knew a better restaurant, if he really wanted to eat. So they went farther uptown. How glad he was that he had someone like Violet for company!

At the other restaurant there was no dancing, but there was more eating. The waiters were busier. None of them seemed to know Violet. They ordered dinner. Violet said, "You order for me," in a comfortable, familiar way, and then ordered herself. Mr. Atwood was glad she did. He would never have known what to ask for. There were so many things one didn't learn about in Sprague, and the magazines never printed correct dinner menus. He was rather dismayed at the prices—he had been brought up to order frugally, but he gallantly put aside all thoughts of money. He had enough with him. He would not spoil his golden day with thoughts mercenary.

They ate heartily. During dinner, though he hated to break the spell, he asked, rather timidly, whether Violet hadn't better telephone her folks that she was staying out for dinner. Wouldn't they worry? In Sprague, a girl always telephoned home if she were invited out to dinner, though, of course, a girl never ate unchaperoned in a restaurant. To be sure, in Sprague there weren't any restaurants except the dining-room at the hotel and a couple of lunchrooms.

Violet looked at him again with that puzzled half-sneer on her face.

"I don't quite get you," she said.

"Why, if you don't come home to dinner, won't your—your people worry at home?" Had he said the wrong thing? Would the man she thought he was have known better?

Violet smiled.

"Go on with your dinner, honey, and stop thinking," she said, "my folks aren't worrying about where I'm going to get my meals. They quit that some time ago."

Her tone rather puzzled Mr. Atwood, but he liked her independence. That was New York for you!

After dinner Violet suggested a roof garden. There was one big musical comedy he hadn't seen. He had applied for tickets on two evenings but both times they seemed to be all gone. He told Violet.

"Leave it to me," said Violet. "I've got a friend who can get a couple of beauties. I'll 'phone him." The waiter brought her a telephone. She arranged for seats. Again the price staggered Mr. Atwood, and again, nobly, he put the thought of money from him. Of course, it was more than he made in a whole day, at the First National, but, wasn't it worth it?

They got in just after the curtain arose. He had never been so near the stage before. He enjoyed it. The seats were far to the left and it was almost like being behind the scenes, something he had always secretly longed for. From his seat he could see the girls chatting in the opposite wings, waiting to go on. Violet seemed part of the play, so daintily she sat there, near to him, still cool in spite of the temperature.

Then Violet took him still farther, to a midnight show this time. More lights, more music, more enchantment. They had a salad now and more things to drink. Everything blurred into a lovely golden maze. Mechanically, he paid the waiter at intervals. Mechanically, he wondered how Violet could drink so much. He wondered what

she was drinking, wondered how she could be on friendly terms with so many people, what her folks thought of her being out so late, if anyone from Sprague had seen him. He rather hoped that someone would see him, cozily seated at the little table with Violet, talking little friendly nothings.

And then—it was time to leave. He would have prolonged the evening forever if he could. Music—lights—drinks—Violet—and New York. He felt himself a man-about-town, a wicked man of the world. Sprague seemed back in a thousand-year-old past. He was living at last. This was the sort of thing that belonged to him.

They took a taxi. Violet gave directions to the driver. Indefinite, indistinct, they passed lighted streets, darkened streets, smooth, rough. He reached for and found her hand, a soft little hand, and pressed it close against his genteel black coat, about where he thought his heart was. He knew that what he was doing was reckless, but—what did he care?

The taxi stopped. The driver opened the door. Mr. Atwood stepped out rather unsteadily, but remembered to assist Violet. He paid the driver and had half a notion to ask him to wait, but the driver left before he made up his mind to ask him. He half thought that Violet told him to go.

The apartment-house was tall, the vestibule dark. Violet opened the heavy vestibule double doors which led into the hallway and then turned to Mr. Atwood, who stood waiting.

"Come on in," she said.

"Inside? Now? I can't. Why, it must be very late," he stammered. "What would your folks say if I were to call this late?"

"Oh, forget the comedy about my folks."

"Why, I'm afraid I don't understand."

"I thought you were stalling about that folks stuff. I'm living all alone. Come on in."

"All alone in this big place?"

"Of course not. I have an apartment here. You're the funniest thing. Let's go in. It's awfully hot standing here."

Mr. Atwood hesitated. Then he decided to confess, after all.

"I—I—why, I'm afraid, Violet, dear," the dear came out by itself, "I'm afraid you don't really know me after all. It would be too unconventional, my calling this late, really. I pretended that I knew you, because I was so very, very lonesome. But, really, I never did see you until to-day."

"Of course you didn't. Did you think I fell for that old acquaintance stuff?"

"Then, you knew all the time and you pretended to know me, like I pretended." He was glad he had confessed. Wasn't it jolly, that they had both pretended, in order to get acquainted?

"Well, come on," Violet interrupted his soliloquy.

"Oh, I can't, my dear, this late. I must hurry back to my room. I leave in the morning, you know. It really would be too unconventional to call at this time. But, it really has been a wonderful day to me."

His head was swimming a bit. He could still hear echoes of hour-old music but he did not forget his Sprague training.

"You are a funny kid," said Violet. She stepped closer and put a little hand on his shoulder.

And then, well, Mr. Atwood never did know how he did it. He never had done such a thing before. He seemed to forget Miss Potter; they weren't really engaged anyhow. He took Violet's hand in his and said, quite low:

"Won't you—kiss me—good-bye, Violet?"

Violet looked at him. It was dim in the hallway but he could see her mouth open and a look of absolute amazement come into her face.

"You mean it? You are asking me to—kiss you good-bye?"

"Yes, won't you, to—to remember our day?" He still held her hand and he put out his other hand rather dizzily.

Violet pulled her hand away.

"Can you beat it?" she said, and stood for a minute looking at him. Then—he could have sworn he heard her laugh—she stepped inside. The door slammed. He tried the knob. It was locked.

Meekly, Mr. Atwood went out into the gray street. By many questionings he found his way back to his rooming house.

He had gone too far. He had made a mistake. He knew that now. She had been so kind, so friendly, to be with him all day, even to ask him to call, and she had known that they were strangers. But he had been too bold. He had dared too much. If only he hadn't asked her to kiss him! He knew now that he had been wicked. But—he wouldn't have been able to have seen her again, anyhow. For there was Sprague and there was Miss Potter to remember.

He had seen New York life in its whirl. He had spent the gayest of gay days with a strange girl, danced with her, held her hand in a taxi—asked her to kiss him. He could never tell these adventures, but he could always remember them. It was enough. He was wicked but unrepentant. In three hours he would leave for Sprague. His vacation was over.



ONE should tell the truth occasionally. It gives an appearance of delightful improbability to one's conversation.

I'M A STRANGER HERE MYSELF

By Sinclair Lewis

TRAVEL broadens the mind. It also quickens the sympathies and bestows on one a ready fund of knowledge. And it is useful to talk about when you get back home.

The Johnsons have now been broadened and quickened. The signature "J. Johnson & Wife," followed by Northernapolis, G. C.," appears in hotel registers from Florida to Maine. "G. C.," of course, stands for their state, the state with the highest bank-deposits and moral standards of any in the Union—the grand old state of God's Country. Let me tell you, sir, whenever you meet a man from God's country, he's willing to tell you so. And does.

J. Johnson & Wife had raised their children and their mortgage, and had bought a small car and a large fireless cooker, when the catastrophe happened. Mrs. Johnson was defeated for the presidency of the Wednesday and Chautauqua Reading Circle by a designing woman who had talked herself into office on the strength of having spent a winter at Pasadena, California, observing the West. Mrs. Johnson went home with her hat-brim low and her lips tight together, and announced to Mr. Johnson that they would travel, and be broadened and quickened.

Mr. Johnson meekly observed that it would be nice to explore the Florida Everglades, and to study business conditions in New York. So, in December, they left their eldest son in charge of the business, and started on an eight-months' tour of the Picturesque Resorts of Our Own Land. In fact, they were going to have an itinerary. Mrs.

Johnson's second cousin, Bessie, had suggested the itinerary. Cousin Bessie had spent two weeks in Florida. She said it was all nonsense to go to places like Palm Beach and St. Augustine—just because rich snobs from New York went there was no reason why independent folks from God's Country, that did their own thinking, should waste their good money. So, with Cousin Bessie's help, Mrs. Johnson made out the following schedule of the beauty-spots of Florida:

Jacksonville, East Palatka, South Daytona, North Tampa, West Miami, Sulphur Water, Jigger Mounds, Diamond Back Ridge, Flatwoods, New Iowa, New Dublin, New Cincinnati, and New New York.

It takes a lot of high-minded heroism to stick faithfully to an itinerary, what with having to catch trains at midnight and all, but with the negligible assistance of Mr. Johnson, Mrs. Johnson stuck to it, though they often had to do two towns in one day. And oh! the rewards in culture! It is true they didn't have time to stop and look for orange-groves or Seminoles or millionaires, but they often felt as though they could smell the odor of oranges wafted to them on the gay breezes, though that may perhaps have been due to fellow-tourists eating oranges and peanuts. Certainly they saw plenty of palms, and at Jacksonville, in the Boston Museum of Curiosities, including the Biggest Fish Ever Killed, in Fierce Marine Battle, by Capt. Pedro O'Toole, the Johnsons beheld a real live alligator.

After the trials and weariness of their explorations, Mrs. Johnson per-

mitted them to settle down for a six-weeks' rest at the Pennsylvania House, in New Chicago, the City Beautiful of the Southland.

New Chicago may not be as old as St. Augustine and these towns that make such claims about antiquity, and heaven only knows if Ponce de Leon really did find any Fountain of Youth at all, and New Chicago may not be filled with a lot of millionaires chasing around in these wheel-chairs and drinking brandy and horse's necks, but New Chicago is neighborly, that's what it is, neighborly. And homey. It was founded by Northern capital, just for tourists. If a gentleman wishes to wear comfy old clothes, he doesn't find some snob in white pants looking askance at him. And New Chicago is so beautiful, and all modern conveniences — none of these rattletrap houses that you find in some Southern cities. It has forty miles of pavement, and nineteen churches, and is in general as spick and span as Detroit or Minneapolis. Why, when you go along the streets, with the cozy boarding-houses, and the well-built private houses of frame, or of ornamental brick with fancy porches and bay-windows and colored glass over the front door, and these nice new two-story concrete bungalows, you can scarcely tell you aren't in a suburb of New York or Chicago, it's all so wide-awake and nicely fixed up and full of Northern hustle. And there's very little danger of being thrown into contact with these lazy, shiftless, native Florida crackers, just fishermen and farmers and common, uninteresting people that have never heard about economics or osteopathy or New Thought or any modern movements. Not but what New Chicago is very Southern and resorty, you understand, with its palms and poinsettias and all sorts of exotic plants and beauty in general.

There isn't any liquor or dancing to tempt the men-folks, and there is an educational Chautauqua every January, with the very best entertainers, and finally New Chicago has, by actual

measurement, more lineal miles of rocking chairs and nice women gossiping and knitting than Ormond and Daytona put together.

At first Mr. Johnson made signs of objecting to the fact that nobody at New Chicago seemed to go fishing. But the hotel and Board of Trade literature convinced him that there was the best fishing in the South within easy reach, and so he settled down and got a good deal of pleasure out of planning to go fishing some day; in fact, went so far as to buy some hooks at the drug-store. He found some men from God's Country who were in the same line of business as himself, and they used to gather in the park and pitch quoits and talk about business conditions back home and have a perfectly hilarious time swapping jokes about Ford cars, and Mike and Pat, and Jakey and Ikey.

Mrs. Johnson also made many acquaintances, such nice, chatty, comfy people, who just took her in and told her about their grandchildren, and made her feel welcome right away.

You see, the minute you arrive at New Chicago, you go and register your name and address at the Board of Trade Building, and all the people from your state look you up immediately, and you have Wisconsin picnics, or Ohio card-parties, or New Hampshire parades, or Middle-West I. O. O. F. suppers. Almost every evening there is some jolly little state gathering in the parlor of one of the hotels, with recitations and songs—Gospel and humorous—and speeches about the state, if there are any lawyers present. Everybody has to do a stunt. Mrs. Johnson made such an impression at the God's Country Rustic Skule Party, when she got up and blushed and said, "I didn't know I was going to be called on for a piece, and I hadn't thought of anything to say, and after hearing all the nice speeches I guess I'll just say 'ditto'!" Mr. Johnson told her afterward that her stunt made the hit of the evening.

New Chicago was no less desirable

from a standpoint of economy. For thirty-two dollars a week the Johnsons had three meals a day, nice, wholesome homey meals, with no French sauces and fancy fixin's, and a dainty room such as would, to quote the hotel prospectus, "appeal to the finest lady of the land, or most hardened tourist, with handsome Michigan Chippendale bureau, two chairs in each room, and bed to lull you to happy dreams, after day spent in the jolly sports of New Chicago, strictly under new management, new linen of fine quality to appeal to heart of most fastidious, bathroom on each floor, ice water cheerfully brought by neat and obliging attendants."

If you were one of these nervous, strenuous folks who felt that you had to have a lot of young people, why, there were several nice young people in town, though it is true that there was quite a large proportion of older people who had reached the point where they were able to get away from business in the winter-time. Still there were some girls who played the piano, and knew pencil and paper games, and they were the life of the knitting circle with their gay young chatter, especially Miss Nellie Slavens, the well-known Iowa professional reader, who scarcely looked a day over thirty, and was a college graduate, the South Dakota Dairy College. Then there was the clerk of Ocean Villa, right next door, such a sociable young man from Trenton, always in demand for parties, and looked so well in his West Palm Beach suit.

And if you wanted sports there were athletic exercises a-plenty, though there wasn't this crowd that show off their silk bathing-suits on the beach, and pay twenty-five dollars for an aeroplane ride, as they do at Palm Beach. Any bright day you could see eight or ten people in bathing at Rocky Shore. Almost every boarding house had a croquet ground, and three of them had tennis courts. The Mayberry sisters, Kittie and Jane, nice sensible girls of thirty or so, were often to be seen playing. And you could always get up a

crowd and charter Dominick Segui's launch, when the engine was in repair, and have a trip down to the shell mound. So, you see, there was any amount of rational sport, and no need for anyone to go to these sporty places.

In short, the Johnsons found every day at New Chicago just one round of innocent pleasures. After a good, wholesome, hearty breakfast of oatmeal, steak, eggs, buckwheats, sausage, and coffee—none of these grits and corn-bread that they have the nerve to offer you for breakfast some places in the South—the Johnsons read the *Northernapolis Herald*, which they got from a live, hustling newsdealer from Minneapolis, and had so much enjoyment out of learning about the deaths and sicknesses and all back home, though it did hurt Mrs. Johnson to see how the new president of the Wednesday Reading Circle was letting it run down. Then they went over to the drug-store, run by a live, hustling Toledo man, and Mr. Johnson bought three Flor de Wheeling cigars, while Mrs. Johnson had a chocolate ice-cream soda and some souvenir post-cards. Then for the rest of the day they were free to walk, or talk, or just sit and be comfy on the porch of their hotel. And there was always such an interesting group of broad-gauged, conservative, liberal, wide-awake, homey, well-traveled folks on the porch to talk to.

For you who may not have been broadened and quickened, or had opportunities for elevating and informative talk, I will give an example of such a conversation as might have been heard on the porch of the Pennsylvania House at any time between seventy A. M. and ninety P. M., and I assure you it isn't a bit above the average run in New Chicago:

"Well, I see there's some new God's Country people come to town, Mr. Johnson—Willis M. Beaver and wife, from Monroe County. Staying at the Chateau Nebraska."

"Well, well! Why, I've met his brother at the state convention of the Order of Peaweevils. Funny, him be-

ing here, way off in the Sunny South, and me knowing his brother. World's pretty small, after all. But still, it certainly is a liberal education to travel."

"Oh, Mrs. Johnson, don't you want to come to our basket-weaving club? We make baskets out of these long pine needles, with rafia—"

Before Mrs. Johnson can answer her husband says, quick as a flash, with that ready wit of his, "Say, uh, Mrs. Bezuzus, I'm glad those pine needles are good for something anyway!"

"Ha, ha!" asserts Mr. Smith. "You said something there! Why, I'd rather have a West Virginia oak in my yard than all the pines and palms in Florida. Same with these early strawberries they talk so much about, not but what it's nice to write home to the folks that you're having strawberries this time of year, but I swear, we wouldn't feed 'em to hogs, up where I come from."

"You hit it right, Brother Smith." It is Dr. Bjones of Kansas speaking, and after Mrs. Bezuzus has suitably commented on the manners, garments, and social standing of some passing newlyweds, Dr. Bjones goes on in his forcible scientific manner: "Same with these Southern fish, not but what I like fresh sea-food and crabs, but I tell you these bass and whittings can't hold a candle to the fresh-water pickerel you get up North. Then these Floridians talk so much about how poisonous their darned old rattlesnakes are. Why, we got rattlers in Kansas that are just as bad any day!"

"But what gets me is the natives, Doc. Shiftless. What this country needs is some Northern hustle."

"That's so, Brother Snuck. Shiftless. And besides that—"

"Oh, Mrs. Smith, I want to show you the sweater I'm knitting."

"—besides being shiftless, look at how they sting us. Simply make all the money they can out of us tourists. Oranges two for a nickel! Why, I can buy jus' good oranges at home for that!"

"And the land! They can talk all they want to about rocky hill soil, but

I wouldn't give one of my Berkshire Hill holdings for all the land south of Baltimore. I can sell you—"

"Pretty warm to-day."

"Yes, I was writing to Jessie, guess she wished she was down here. She wrote me it was snowing and ten below—"

Mrs. Johnson was always afire for accurate botanical information, and of the scientific Dr. Bjones she inquired; "What are these palmettoes good for?"

"Well, you know, I'm kind of a stranger in Florida, too, but I believe the natives eat the nuts from them."

"Oh, can anybody tell me what connections I make for Ciudad Dinero?"

"Why, you take the 9:16, Mrs. Bezuzus, and change at Lemon Grove—"

"No, you change at Avocado and take the jitney—"

"Is there a good hotel at Ciudad?"

"Well, I've heard the Blubb House is a first-class place; three-dollar-a-day house. Oh, how did you like the Royal Miasma at—"

"Oh, I suppose it's awful famous, and it's very dressy, everybody changed their clothes for supper, but I prefer Cape Cod Court, not an expensive place, you understand, but so homey—"

"Yes, but for table give me Dr Gunk's Health Cottage, and the beds there—"

"Well, we started in on the West Coast and went to St. Petersburg and Tampa and Fort Myers, and then back to Ocala and Silver Springs, and took the Ocklawaha trip and all, and we stopped a day at Palatka—"

"Oh, Mrs. Bjones, how do you do that stitch?"

Often the crowd on the porch ceased these lighter divertissements and spoke seriously of real highbrow topics, like Bryan and Villa and defense and T. R. and self-starters and Billy Sunday and Harold Bell Wright. The Johnsons certainly had come to the right shop for being broadened and quickened, and Mrs. Johnson often told her husband that she would take back to the Wednesday Reading Circle such a fund

of ready information and ideas as a Certain Person couldn't have gotten in California if she'd stayed there a hundred years!

So went the Johnsons' hours of gaieties many-colored and tropical, and when the long, happy day was over, New Chicago afforded them a succulent supper or a dainty repast, and then ho! for the movies, and no city has better movies than New Chicago, scenes from the whole wide world spread before you there on the screen, scenes from Paris and Pekin and Peoria, made by the best Los Angeles companies. At least once a week the Johnsons were able to see their favorite film hero, Effingham Fish, in a convulsing comedy.

How wondrous 'tis to travel in unfamiliar climes!

Spring was on its way, and at last the Johnsons were ready to bid farewell to New Chicago, the land of mystery and languor, adventure and dolce far niente.

Their trunk was packed. Mr. Johnson's slippers had been run to earth, or at least to dust, under their bed, and his razor-strop had been recovered from behind the bureau, when Mrs. Johnson suddenly exclaimed, "Oh! Why, we haven't studied the flora and fauna of Florida yet, and I don't know but what we ought to, for club-papers."

"Well, you haven't got all the time in the world left for it," said Mr. Johnson, who had a pretty wit.

"Well, we're all packed, and we have three hours before the train goes."

She dragged him out and they hired a surrey driven by a bright, hustling Northern negro—not one of these ignorant Southern darkies—and they galloped out to Dr. Bible's orange-grove, admission ten cents, one of the show-places in the suburbs of New Chicago.

There it was, trees and fruit and— and everything; a sight to broaden and quicken one.

The Johnsons solemnly gazed at it. "Yes," said Mrs. Johnson, "that's an orange-grove! Just think! And grape-

fruit. . . . It's very pretty. . . . I wonder if they sell post-card views of it."

"Yes," said Mr. Johnson, "that's an orange-grove. Well, well! . . . Well, I guess we better drive on."

They next studied the shell mound. There's something very elevating about the sight of such a relic of long-past ages—shows how past ages lived, you know—gives you a broader sympathy with history and all that. There she was, all in layers, millions of shells, just where the Indians had thrown them. Ages and ages ago. The Johnsons must have gazed at the mound for five or ten minutes. Mr. Johnson was so interested that he asked the driver, "Do they ever find tommyhawks in these mounds?"

"Don't know, sir," said the driver thoughtfully. "I'm a stranger in New Chicago."

"Yes," said Mr. Johnson, "I shouldn't wonder if they found relics there. Very, very ancient, I should say. When you think of how filling just one oyster-fry is, and then all these shells— Well, mama, I guess that's about all we wanted to see, isn't it?"

"Well, we might drive back by Mr. Capo's estate; they tell me he has some fine Florida shrubbery there."

They passed the Capo estate, but there wasn't much to see—just trees with kind of white berries, and tall shrubs with stalks curiously like the bamboo fish-poles that boys use, back home. Mrs. Johnson's eagle glance darted to the one object of interest, and she wanted to know something:

"Stop, driver. John, I wonder what that plant is there, like a little palm, with that thing like a cabbage in the center. I wonder if it isn't a pineapple plant."

Well, having the unfair position of author, know that it was really a sago palm—not that we wish to boast of our knowledge of floras, and so, if you will pardon our interruption:

"Well," said Mr. Johnson helpfully. "I understand they grow farther south. But even so this might be an

erotic pineapple, just grown here in gardens."

"Well, maybe. There's a couple of people coming. Why don't you ask them?"

They let the first of the two approaching men pass them—he was only a common, ignorant native. But the second was a fine, keen, hustling fellow on a bicycle, and Mrs. Johnson hailed him: "Can you tell me what that plant is?"

"That, madam—"

The Johnsons listened attentively, alert as ever in acquiring knowledge.

"—that plant? Well, I don't just exactly know. I'm a stranger here myself."

The Johnsons had to hurry back for their train, but they interestedly discussed all the flora and fauna on the way, including pines, buzzards, and pickaninnies. "Isn't it nice," said Mrs. Johnson, "to plunge right out and explore like this! I just bet that cat, with her winter in California, never stirred out of her own dooryard. Well, Florida certainly has been a novel experience, and improved our minds so much. Driver, is that a mocking-bird, on that skinny dead tree?"

"Yassum, that's a mocking-bird . . . Or maybe it's a robin."

II

ADDING experiences in Georgia and Virginia and the Carolinas to their knowledge of Florida, the Johnsons saw and drank deep of Savannah, Charleston, Asheville, Richmond, and Newport News. They were able to do all five cities in six days, while the Bezuzuses had taken eight for them. In Charleston they saw Calhoun's grave and learned all about the aristocratic society. They were so pleasantly entertained there, by a very prominent and successful business acquaintance of Mr. Johnson's, a Mr. Max Rosenfleisch of New York, who had bought a fine old Southern mansion in Charleston and thus, of course, was right in with all the old families socially. Mr. Rosenfleisch said he liked the aristo-

crats, but was going to change a lot of their old-fashioned social ways, and show them how to have a real swell time, with cabarets and theater parties, instead of these slow dances, and teach them to dine at seven instead of three or four. The Johnsons were quite thrilled at witnessing the start of this social revolution—I tell you, it's when you travel that you have such unusual adventures. They themselves would actually have met some of the inner social set of Charleston, but Mr. Rosenfleisch was having the den redecorated before giving any more of his smart, exclusive parties, and meantime the Johnsons had to be getting on—to a tourist, time is valuable.

At the beginning of spring, when the narcissi and the excursionists are out, the Johnsons arrived at Washington, where every good citizen should go, to show the lawmakers that we uphold their hands, and to give them our ideas about enlarging the army. The Johnsons found the nicest sightseeing car, with such a bright young man from Denver for barker, and he told how high the Washington Monument was, how much the Patent Office had cost to build, how long it had taken to decorate the Congressional Library in the Spanish Omelet style, how far the guns in the Navy Yard would shoot, where Joe Cannon lived, and numerous other broadening and quickening facts which filled them with pride in being citizens of the greatest country in the world.

The Johnsons' congressman received them with flattering attentions which would have turned heads less level than theirs; he rushed over and shook hands with them the minute they came into his private office, and while just for the moment he couldn't remember their name, he had it right on the tip of his tongue, and said, "Why, of course, of course," when Mr. Johnson refreshed his memory. He recalled perfectly having shaken hands with them once at Northernapolis. He was so sorry that he was expecting the Ways and Means Committee to meet in his office, right away, for he did so want to have them

stay there and chat with him about the folks back home. As an indication of his pleasure in seeing them, he honored them with a special card which enabled them to hear the epoch-making debates in Congress, from a gallery reserved just for distinguished visitors and friends of congressmen. As they listened to a vigorous oration on the duty on terrapin, Mrs. Johnson said triumphantly: "John, I guess that cat never heard anything like that in her Pasadena that she's always talking about at the Reading Circle!"

Travelers have to be of heroic mold to endure the dangers and disasters of exploration; and the Johnsons showed the quiet dignity of *noblesse oblige* during a most disagreeable incident at Washington . . . Mrs. Johnson wished to find the house in which Commodore Decatur had lived, as an ancestor of hers had been a very near and dear friend of one of the Commodore's gunswabbers. She asked quite a number of apparently well-informed tourists, but, with a pathetic lack of sound information, they all murmured that they didn't know, being themselves strangers in Washington. Then she had the original idea of asking the clerk at their hotel.

"Decatur House?" he said. "I know where the Ebbitt House is, and the White House, and Colonel House, but I pass up the Decatur House. Sorry . . . Here, boy, shoot this package up to 427."

"Why, I mean the historic old mansion of Commodore Decatur."

"Madam, I can tell you where to get your kodak films developed, and where to find the largest oysters in town, and where to pay your bill, and what time the 5:43 train goes, but that's all I know. I come from Chicago, and if God is good to me, I'm going back there, where there's no congressmen, and they keep the tourists inside the Loop."

"Well, can't you tell us where we can find out?"

"Madam, you will find a guide-book at the news-stand."

From the news-stand they overheard the clerk saying to a fellow menial:

"—yes, I know, I oughtn't to be a grouch, but she wouldn't take 'no' for an answer. And ten minutes ago some other female wanted to know where Lincoln was buried, and just before that an old boy was sore because I couldn't tell him what is the sum total of all the pensions the Government is paying, and before that somebody wanted to know how much the dome of the Capitol weighs. These tin-can paper-bag tourists drive me wild. I ain't just an information bureau—I'm a whole bedroom suite, instalment plan."

Mr. Johnson said to his wife with that quiet force which all his associates in Northernapolis know and admire, "If he means us by 'tin-can paper-bag tourists,' I'm going to chastise him, I am, no matter what it costs! In fact, I'll speak to the manager!"

"Now, John," his wife urged, "he simply is beneath your contempt."

"Well, perhaps that's right."

The Johnsons decided not to waste a quarter on a guide-book, and strolled out to ask a policeman where the Decatur House was.

Although they found that Washington was like Florida in needing Western hustle, what with the service so slow that they didn't finish dinner before twelve-thirty, some noons, yet the Johnsons discovered a news-stand where they could buy the *Northernapolis Herald*, and there was the nicest big drug-store run by a live, hustling Milwaukee man, where Mr. Johnson could get his favorite Flor de Wheeling cigars, while Mrs. Johnson had a chocolate ice-cream soda and some post-cards. And a movie-theater featuring Effingham Fish in comedies. So, altogether, in their Washington sojourn they had much homey pleasure as well as broadening insight into how public affairs are conducted. And the nicest souvenirs.

Again they took their staves and wardrobe-scrip and continued their pilgrimage to the ancient and historic

spots of our own land. They were able to do Baltimore and Philadelphia thoroughly in two days, and would have finished up Atlantic City in another day, except that they found it was so much cheaper to get rates by the week. Then off for New York.

Mrs. Johnson was willing to sacrifice, to wear herself to the bone, studying the deeper esthetic, psychological and economic problems of New York, that she might bring home new ideas to the Wednesday Reading Circle. But New York wouldn't let itself be studied. It was perfectly crazy. Everybody in New York, they found, spent all his time in cafés, tea-rooms, cabarets, or Bohemian restaurants where women smoke. The only homey, comfortable place they found was a nice quiet drug-store where Mr. Johnson got his Flor de Wheeling cigars. And the prices—! They were glad to pass on to New Haven, to Hartford, the Berkshires, and Boston—where they saw several headquarters of Washington, and the most interesting graves, Emerson and Hawthorne and all sorts of people, and such nice artistic postcards. Then to Maine, and, in mid-summer, down to Cape Cod, and Provincetown.

The Johnsons didn't plan to spend more than one day at Provincetown. They felt that Northernapolis was beginning to need them, and they had really seen everything there was to see in the East and South. But at Provincetown they had such a pleasant surprise that they stayed two whole weeks—they ran into Dr. and Mrs. Bjones of Wichita, with whom they had had the jolly times at New Chicago. With the Bjoneses the Johnsons picnicked on the dunes, and even went swimming once, and sat on the porch of Mrs. Ebenezer's boarding house, discussing various hotels and the Bjoneses' interesting itinerary. They didn't want to be mean, but they couldn't help crowing a little when they found that they had seen six graves of famous men which the Bjoneses had missed entirely!

The Johnsons didn't really like Prov-

incetown. Of course the Bjoneses were interesting, and after a time they met some nice comfy people from Indianapolis and Omaha, and Mr. Johnson was able to get his Flor de Wheeling cigars. But Provincetown was filled with fishermen, acting as though they owned the place, and smelling it all up with their dories and schooners and nets and heaven knows what all, dirty, common Portuguese and Yankee fishermen, slopping along the street in nasty old oilskins covered with fish-scales, and not caring if they brushed right up against you. And the old wharves, all smelly. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were the first to be interested in any new phenomenon, and once they went right out on a wharf and asked all about the fishing industry and whaling. But still—as Mr. Johnson said with that ready satire which made him so popular a speaker at the dinners of the Northernapolis Chamber of Commerce—they didn't care to associate with dead fish all their lives, even if they did like Effingham Fish in the movies!

When the Bjoneses left there was nothing more to study, nothing to observe.

Said Mrs. Johnson, "We've seen every inch of the South and East, now, and no one can say we haven't been unprejudiced and open-minded—the way we've gone into the flora and fauna, and among industries and all—but I must say we haven't seen a single place that begins to come up to Northernapolis."

"You never said a better thing in your life, mama, and what's more, we'll start for Northernapolis to-morrow!"

They were due to arrive in Northernapolis at two P. M. Mrs. Johnson was making notes for Wednesday Reading Circle papers about the Fruit of the Tropics, the Negro Problem, Fishing on Cape Cod, and How the Government Is Conducted at Washington.

"Guess that hen won't talk so much about Pasadena after this," Mr. John-

son chuckled. "Say, we'll have time to say 'howdy' to the folks and go to the movies to-night, to celebrate our return. And I'll be able to get a decent cigar again—can't buy a Flor de Wheeling on a single one of these trains. Well, mama, it'll be pretty good to get back where we know every inch, and won't have to ask questions and feel like outsiders, eh?"

Such a surprise as it would be for the children! The Johnsons hadn't wired them they were coming.

Northernapolis! The fine, big, dirty factories—evidences of Northernapolis's hustling spirit! The good old-fashioned homey station! The Central House 'bus!

They stood out on Main Street, excitedly hailing a street car. Then—

You see, as a matter of fact this isn't a satire, but a rather tragic story about two pathetic, good-hearted, friendly yearners, as you should already have perceived—

Then Mr. Johnson dropped his suitcase and stood amazed. A block down from the station was a whole new row of two-story brick stores. "Why," he exclaimed, "I never read about that row going up!" He was bewildered, lost. He turned to a man who was also waiting for the car and inquired, "What's those new buildings?"

"Dunno," said the man. "I'm a stranger here myself."



ONCE I MET HAPPINESS

By Margaret Widdemer

ONCE when all the Spring was wild
All the leaves dew-pearled,
Once I met Happiness,
Singing down the world.

She had laughter on her lips,
Blossoms in her hair—
Once I met Happiness—
Oh, she was fair!

There was yellow sun, I know,
Scent o' pine, that day. . . .
Once she kissed me on the brow,
Laughed, and went her way.

What if all the lights are dim,
All the flowers furled?
Once I met Happiness
Singing down the world!



WHEN a woman says she loves her husband, she is always trying to deceive someone. Often it is herself.



WOMAN!

By Henry Hugh Hunt

SHE sat on the dirty cot in her cell.
She had torn angrily at her dress until her still beautiful bosom was revealed.
But her face, coarsened by drink and dissipation, had lost all appearance of femininity.
The stream of oaths and obscenity which issued huskily from her lips was that of a masculine brute.
Suddenly she began to scream, and a guard approached commanding silence.
"You gimme back my powder-rag!" demanded the woman fiercely.



MEMORY

By Bruce Reid

I TURNED the pages of an old book I used to read.
Three violets, colorless, lay pressed between the pages.
A yellowed memory of sentiment clings to them.
I had put them there for remembrance.
And yet, I do not know who gave them to me
Nor what I wanted to remember.
All I know is that I once was young.



A WOMAN'S glory is to believe in a man when others distrust him; her tragedy, to find that the others are right.



AFTER thirty, it is a rare man who will not surrender happiness to comfort,—
and even the rare man will do it sometimes.



KISS, not when it is expected, but when it is merely hoped for. That is art.

HER TYPICAL EXPERIENCE

By Gertrude Macaulay

If a man has character, he has also his typical experience.—*Nietzsche*.

IT seemed quite natural that the man on her left should bore, that the man on her right should pique, and that at the next table an unknown man should be interested.

She was a woman of many successes, so her life in retrospect seemed a perpetual quadrangle—herself and the same three men—one who wanted her, one she wanted, and a new one. Of course the actors changed at a dazzling rate, passing on from the new to the desired, so on to the desiring, and therefore hastily relegated to the forgotten.

But to-night she was cursed with perspective. As she pulled off her gloves, and smiled at the nonentity of a woman who also always hovered background-like about her, filling awkward fourth chairs, it seemed that she was parodying herself.

At how many such dinners had she frivoleed, at how many more must she participate before the curtain dropped on her changing role?

The man at the next table really *was* interested. He did not know that he or his ilk was always on her horizon.

Frank, on her left, asked her to have another cocktail in the tone in which he had been proposing these last three days—a soft, unvirile tone that was becoming a habit.

She adjusted her shoulder-strap and smiled in the direction of his face.

"Another cocktail? Not usually. But to-night—perhaps. When the past and the future intrude on the present—I suppose."

The man she called Frank ordered more cocktails.

She glanced at the man on her right. "Jack," she asked, looking defiantly into his long, narrow eyes, "am I not right? When the past drags on one's memory, and the future snuffs out one's abandon, what do you do?"

He looked with cool admiration into her restless eyes.

"Many things you should not."

"Oh," she pouted, "why not? Tell me."

"Have you no imagination? Besides, what matter the road, it can lead but to Rome."

"Rome being?"

"To make an island of the present."

She clapped her hands softly. "I love that. And to-night I want to cut *my* present loose." She turned to the man on her left. "Frank, listen, my soul stirs, please order much, much champagne."

The man at the next table refilled his glass. He had grey hair, but he was not old. She glanced at the man on her right; his eyes were tired, those long, narrow eyes, so far away.

She drank her cocktail and began to play with her *hors d'oeuvres*. In the center of the room, in a sort of large well, sunk six feet below the diners, people danced. It was a languorous hesitation. Frank touched her hand.

"Shall we?" he whispered.

How many hundred times had she thus risen, bored but burdened with the obligation of previous encouragement, to dance with a man who had loved too long?

Yet not long past she had admired his fine shoulders, and his six feet two

of length, she had smiled up into his eyes, and had been her most provocatively flirtatious. Now he bored her, and his touch was repulsive to her.

He looked at her wistfully. "I love you, dear," he said.

She shrugged impatiently.

"Do be more original."

Like the classic worm, he tried to turn.

"You're incapable—couldn't love anyone but yourself," he muttered.

"Realizing that, why bother?"

"Don't be childish. As if one loved where the brain approved! No, love is a disease, and you were very charming to me during the incubation period, but now that I am incurably sick of it, you shrug and are bored."

"I can no more help being bored than you can stop loving."

"Ever heard of Typhoid Mary?"

"I believe so."

"Well, you're a sort of public menace, too—a center of passionate infections—"

She yawned. "All of which has been said before."

He shook his head sadly. "Your hair is more beautiful than ever, and your skin—that faint flush—"

She sighed. "I'd rather like Kerry to say such things to me."

Kerry was the man with the long, narrow eyes—rather tired.

"He probably will," cynically. "Did you ever want anything you didn't get?"

She considered a moment. "No," with a shrug, "and I never got anything and found it satisfying."

"Which ought to teach you—"

"Oh, please stop. I hate being lectured. I refuse to dance any more."

She stood still till he dropped his hand from her waist, and then she led him back to their table, where Kerry and the feminine nonentity were boring each other. She sat down lazily and smiled into the long, narrow eyes.

"You were the handsomest couple on the floor," he said casually.

"I suppose Frank *would* be considered good to look at," she replied indif-

ferently. "Frank, dance with Mary, there's a dear. I want to see if you do look so very fine on the floor."

"Shall we, Mary?" wearily.

"Oh, yes, let's," with pathetic eagerness.

"Thank goodness, they're gone. I wanted to talk to you," turning softly to the long, narrow eyes, while out of the corner of her eye she saw the man at the next table watching her, and she wondered what had turned his hair grey so young.

"Having stamped your exquisite little heel upon our friend Frank's heart, you now sigh for new worlds to conquer?"

"Don't be horrid."

"I'm not. It is pleasant—to be conquered."

Her eyes brightened. She leaned eagerly to him. "Oh, isn't it? Silly fools talk of the joy of conquest, and when I was very, oh, *very*, young, I longed to subjugate, but now"—she smiled into his eyes.

"Yes. Now?"

"Oh, I am pathetically grateful to anyone who can make *me* long for things."

His brows raised. "*Do you ever?* You look too shallowly successful."

She dropped her lids, and shook her head. "Even the man at the next table could tell you better than that."

"Why the man at the next table?"

"Because there is a curious affinity between us. He sees right into my—don't laugh, I *will* say it—into my soul. He sees latent"—she broke off, "Oh, what rubbish I talk to-night."

"Ever seen him before?"

"No, but he is always with me—the man at the next table."

He smiled. "Like the girl whose eye I catch for an instant in a crowd?"

"I suppose so."

"Do you remember a week ago at the Ritz one afternoon? You were having tea. You didn't see me, but the next day, Jack Barry phoned, and asked you if he might present me."

She smiled indulgently. "So you

thought I didn't see you? Why, you were the man at the next table."

"Oh, no, three tables off."

"It's the same thing."

"Oh, is it?"

"And I wondered what had made your eyes so tired?"

"And have you found out?"

"No, but I am more eager to do so. Won't you—please—tell me?"

"Women."

"Try homeopathy?"

"I don't know that I want to be cured."

"Which means you think you are."

"Perhaps."

She shrugged. "Listen—my philosophy—if I cannot want that which I have, I will at least not want that which I may not have."

"And its concrete application to the present?"

"I cannot want Frank, I refuse any longer to want you—the man at the next table is yet unpigeonholed; he might do as an emotional *pis-aller*."

The narrow eyes widened slightly.

"Did you say '*any longer*'?"

She nodded. Then the long eyes narrowed again and he smiled cynically.

"I am sorry you have been so successful."

"Why?"

"Because its price has been your sincerity."

"If that were true I could join you in your blissful immunity."

He shook his head unconvincedly.

"I shouldn't care to play with you. Your dice are always loaded, and you'd never see the game through."

She spread out the palms of her hands expressively.

"Look at me," she said softly, "do you fancy that rings and jewels, elab-

orate coiffuring and a faint make-up, the last word in frocks and the memory of past triumphs—do you think these things can alter the woman beneath?"

He looked at the soft, upturned palms, at the round, white arms, and then into the large, troubled eyes.

"Do you think," she continued, "I can escape the common curse?"

"You seemed to think *I* could."

She leaned forward so that their heads were close, as he, too, bent towards her, and as she dropped her eyes, she muttered slowly, as if unable to find the right words:

"Why are we made so? Life, it seems, is like—I can't get feelings into words—but like—well, like a rat gnawing at the heart, and the heart cries out, and Love hears, and drugs it for a while, and then"—

"And the last state of that man is worse than the first," with a short laugh.

She raised her eyes, and looked into his long, grey ones. They were less narrow, less tired than heretofore—there was a new look in them, half hunger, half recklessness.

And the part of her that remembered many triumphs whispered that now she had him, and the part of her that felt as if a rat were gnawing at her heart felt suddenly sick yet glad.

Quietly, like a man who feels himself beaten, yet with a thin note of defiance in his voice, he said under his breath:

"I should like to see you again—soon—very often."

The man at the next table rose and walked away. She knew that in a week or a month he would be sitting where the gray eyes now were, and there would be a new man at the next table.



WHEN a woman's cheque on the Bank of Love is returned with the mark "N. G.," it usually means "New Girl."

A PANORAMA OF BABIES

By W. L. D. Bell

BABIES smelling of camomile tea, cologne water, wet laundry and dog soap. Red, rough-looking babies with heads resembling rubber bath sponges. Babies who appear old, disillusioned and tired of life at six months. Babies who cry "Papa!" to blushing youths of nineteen or twenty at church picnics. Fat babies whose ear-lobes turn out at an angle of forty-five degrees. Soft, pulpy babies asleep in perambulators, the sun shining straight into their faces. Babies gnawing the tails of synthetic dogs. Babies without necks. Pale, scorbutic babies of the third and fourth generation, damned because their grandfathers and great-grandfathers read Tom Paine. Babies of a bluish tinge, or with vermilion eyes. Babies full of soporifics. Thin,

cartilaginous babies that stretch when they are lifted. Warm, damp, miasmatic babies. Affectionate, ingratiating, gurgling babies: the *larvæ* of life-insurance solicitors, fashionable doctors, Episcopal rectors, dealers in Mexican mine stock, handshakers, Sunday-school superintendents. Babies with heads of thick, coarse, black hair, seeming to be in toupées. Unbaptized babies, dedicated to the devil. Eugenic babies. Babies that crawl out from under tables, and are stepped on. Babies with lentils, grains of corn or shoe-buttons up their noses, purple in the face and waiting for the doctor—or the embalmer. A few pink, blue-eyed, tight-skinned, clean-looking babies, smiling upon the world. . . .



THE NECKLACE

By John McClure

THE songs I made in a hundred towns,
The songs I made on a hundred ways,
I shall give them all to my love-lady
To brighten her nights and days.

I shall hang them all on her neck, I swear,
Like crimson rubies and diamonds white,
A string of jewels for her to wear
To make her beauty bright!



THE THREE SAILORS' GAMBIT

By Lord Dunsany

SITTING, some years ago, in the ancient tavern at Over, one afternoon in Spring, I was waiting, as was my custom, for something strange to happen. In this I was not always disappointed, for the very curious, leaded panes of that tavern, facing the sea, let a light into that low-ceilinged room so mysterious, particularly at evening, that it somehow seemed to affect the events within. Be that as it may, I have seen strange things in that tavern and heard stranger things told.

And as I sat there three sailors entered the tavern, just back, as they said, from sea, and come with sunburned skins from a very long voyage to the South; and one of them had a board and chessmen under his arm, and they were complaining that they could find no one who knew how to play chess. This was the year that the tournament was in England. And a little dark man at a table in a corner of the room, drinking sugar and water, asked them why they wished to play chess. And they said that they would play any man for a pound. They opened their box of chessmen then, a cheap and nasty set, and the man refused to play with such uncouth pieces, and the sailors suggested that perhaps he could find better ones, and in the end he went round to his lodgings, near by, and brought his own, and then they sat down to play for a pound a side. It was a consultation game on the part of the sailors; they said all three must play.

Well, the little dark man turned out to be Stavlokratz.

Of course, he was fabulously poor, and the sovereign meant more to him than it did to the sailors, but he didn't

seem keen to play; it was the sailors that insisted; he had made the badness of the sailors' chessmen an excuse for not playing at all, but the sailors had overruled that, and then he told them straight out who he was, and the sailors had never heard of Stavlokratz.

Well, no more was said after that. Stavlokratz said no more, either, because he did not wish to boast, or because he was huffed that they did not know who he was. And I saw no reason to enlighten the sailors about him; if he took their pound they had brought it on themselves, and my boundless admiration for his genius made me feel that he deserved whatever might come his way. He had not asked to play; they had named the stakes; he had warned them, and gave them first move; there was nothing unfair about Stavlokratz.

I had never seen Stavlokratz before, but I had played over nearly every one of his games in the World Championship for the last three or four years; he was always, of course, the model chosen by students. Only young chess-players can appreciate my delight at seeing him play first-hand.

Well, the sailors used to lower their heads almost as low as the table and mutter together before every move, but they muttered so low that you could not hear what they planned.

They lost three pawns almost straight off, then a knight, and shortly after a bishop; they were playing, in fact, the famous Three Sailors' Gambit.

Stavlokratz was playing with the easy confidence that they say was usual with him, when suddenly, at about the thirteenth move, I saw him look sur-

prised; he leaned forward and looked at the board and then at the sailors, but he learned nothing from their vacant faces; he looked back at the board again.

He moved more deliberately after that; the sailors lost two more pawns; Stavlokratz had lost nothing as yet. He looked at me, I thought, almost irritably, as though something would happen that he wished I was not there to see. I believed at first he had qualms about taking the sailors' pound, until it dawned on me that he might lose the game; I saw that possibility in his face, not on the board, for the game had become almost incomprehensible to me. I cannot describe my astonishment. And a few moves later Stavlokratz resigned.

The sailors showed no more elation than if they had won some game with greasy cards, playing amongst themselves.

Stavlokratz asked them where they got their opening. "We kind of thought of it," said one. "It just come into our heads, like," said another. He asked them questions about the ports they had touched at. He evidently thought, as I did myself, that they had learned their extraordinary gambit, perhaps, in some old dependency of Spain, from some young master of chess whose fame had not reached Europe. He was very eager to find who this man could be, for neither of us imagined that those sailors had invented it, nor would anyone who had seen them. But he got no information from the sailors.

Stavlokratz could very ill afford the loss of a pound. He offered to play them again for the same stakes. The sailors began to set up the white pieces. Stavlokratz pointed out that it was his turn for first move. The sailors agreed, but continued to set up the white pieces and sat with the white before them waiting for him to move. It was a trivial incident, but it revealed to Stavlokratz and myself that none of these sailors was aware that white always moves first.

Stavlokratz played on them his own

opening, reasoning, of course, that, as they had never heard of Stavlokratz, they would not know of his opening; and with probably a very good hope of getting back his pound, he played the fifth variation with its tricky seventh move, at least so he intended, but it turned to a variation unknown to the students of Stavlokratz.

Throughout this game I watched the sailors closely, and I became sure, as only an attentive watcher can be, that the one on their left, Jim Bunion, did not even know the moves.

When I had made up my mind about this I watched only the other two, Adam Bailey and Bill Sloggs, trying to make out which was the master mind; and for a long while I could not. And then I heard Adam Bailey mutter six words, the only words I heard throughout the game, of all their consultations, "No, him with the horse's head." And I decided that Adam Bailey did not know what a knight was, though, of course, he might have been explaining things to Bill Sloggs, but it did not sound like that; so that left Bill Sloggs. I watched Bill Sloggs after that with a certain wonder; he was no more intellectual than the others to look at, though rather more forceful perhaps. Poor old Stavlokratz was beaten again.

Well, in the end I paid for Stavlokratz, and tried to get a game with Bill Sloggs alone, but this he would not agree to, it must be all three or none; and then I went back with Stavlokratz to his lodgings. He very kindly gave me a game; of course it did not last long but I am more proud of having been beaten by Stavlokratz than of any game that I have ever won. And then we talked for an hour about the sailors, and neither of us could make head or tail of them. I told him what I had noticed about Jim Bunion and Adam Bailey, and he agreed with me that Bill Sloggs was the man, though as to how he had come by that gambit, or that variation of Stavlokratz's own opening, he had no theory.

I had the sailors' address, which was that tavern as much as anywhere, and

they were to be there all that evening. As evening drew in I went back to the tavern, and found there still the three sailors. And I offered Bill Sloggs two pounds for a game with him alone and he refused, but in the end he played me for a drink. And then I found that he had not heard of the "en passant" rule, and believed that the fact of checking the king prevented him from castling, and did not know that a player can have two or more queens on the board at the same time if he queens his pawns, or that a pawn could ever become a knight; and he made as many of the stock mistakes as he had time for in a short game, which I won. I thought that I should have got at the secret then, but his mates who had sat scowling all the while in the corner came up and interfered. It was a breach of their compact apparently for one to play chess by himself, at any rate they seemed angry. So I left the tavern then and came back again next day, and the next day and the day after, and often saw the three sailors, but none were in a communicative mood. I had got Stravlokratz to keep away, and they could get no one to play chess with at a pound a side, and I would not play with them unless they told me the secret.

And then one evening I found Jim Bunion drunk, yet not so drunk as he wished, for the two pounds were spent; and I gave him very nearly a tumbler of whiskey, or what passed for whiskey in that tavern in Over, and he told me the secret at once. I had given the others some whiskey to keep them quiet, and later on in the evening they must have gone out, but Jim Bunion stayed with me by a little table, leaning across it and talking low, right into my face, his breath smelling all the while of what passed for whiskey.

The wind was blowing outside as it does on bad nights in November, coming up with moans from the South, towards which the tavern faced with all its leaded panes, so that none but I was able to hear his voice as Jim Bunion gave up his secret.

They had sailed for years, he told

me, with Bill Snyth; and on their last voyage home Bill Snyth had died. And he was buried at sea. Just the other side of the line they buried him, and his pals divided his kit, and these three got his crystal that only they knew he had, which Bill got one night in Cuba. They played chess with the crystal.

And he was going on to tell me about that night in Cuba when Bill had bought the crystal from the stranger, how some folks might think that they had seen thunderstorms, but let them go and listen to that one that thundered in Cuba when Bill was bringing his crystal and they'd find that they didn't know what thunder was. But then I interrupted him, unfortunately perhaps, for it broke the thread of his tale and set him rambling a while, and cursing other people and talking of other lands, China, Port Said and Spain; but I brought him back to Cuba again in the end. I asked him how they could play chess with a crystal, and he said that you looked at the board and looked at the crystal, and there was the game in the crystal the same as it was on the board, with all the odd little pieces looking just the same though smaller, horse's heads and whatnots; and as soon as the other man moved the move came out in the crystal, and then your move appeared after it, and all you had to do was to make it on the board. If you didn't make the move that you saw in the crystal things got very bad in it, everything horribly mixed and moving about rapidly, and scowling and making the same move over and over again, and the crystal getting cloudier and cloudier; it was best to take one's eyes away from it then, or one dreamt about it afterwards, and the foul little pieces came and cursed you in your sleep and moved about all night with their crooked moves.

I thought then that, drunk though he was, he was not telling the truth, and I promised to show him to people who played chess all their lives so that he and his mates could get a pound whenever they liked, and I promised not to reveal his secret even to Stavlokratz, if

only he would tell me all the truth; and this promise I have kept till long after the three sailors have lost their secret. I told him straight out that I did not believe in the crystal. Well, Jim Bunion leaned forward then, even further across the table, and swore he had seen the man from whom Bill had bought the crystal and that he was one to whom anything was possible. To begin with his hair was villainously dark, and his features were unmistakable even down there in the South, and he could play chess with his eyes shut, and even then he could beat anyone in Cuba. But there was more than this, there was the bargain he made with Bill that told one who he was. He sold that crystal for Bill Snyth's soul.

Jim Bunion leaning over the table with his breath in my face nodded his head several times and was silent.

I began to question him then. Did they play chess as far away as Cuba? He said they all did. Was it conceivable that any man would make such a bargain as Snyth made? Wasn't the trick well known? Wasn't it in hundreds of books? And if he couldn't read books mustn't he have heard from sailors that that is the Devil's commonest dodge to get souls from silly people?

Jim Bunion had leant back in his own chair quietly smiling at my questions, but when I mentioned silly people he leaned forward again, and thrust his face close to mine and asked me several times if I called Bill Snyth silly. It seemed that these three sailors thought a great deal of Bill Snyth and it made Jim Bunion angry to hear anything said against him. I hastened to say that the bargain seemed silly, though not, of course, the man who made it; for the sailor was almost threatening, and no wonder, for the whiskey in that dim tavern would madden a nun.

When I said that the bargain seemed silly he smiled again, and then he thundered his fist down on the table and said that no one had ever yet got the better of Bill Snyth and that that was

the worst bargain for himself that the Devil ever made, and that from all he had read or heard of the Devil he had never been so badly had before as the night when he met Bill Snyth at the inn in the thunderstorm in Cuba, for Bill Snyth already had the damndest soul at sea; Bill was a good fellow but his soul was damned right enough, so he got the crystal for nothing.

Yes, he was there and saw it all himself, Bill Snyth in the Spanish inn and the candles flaring, and the Devil walking in out of the rain; and then the bargain between those two old hands, and the Devil going out into the lightning, and the thunderstorm raging on, and Bill Snyth sitting chuckling to himself between the bursts of the thunder.

But I had more questions to ask and interrupted this reminiscence. Why did they all three always play together? And a look of something like fear came over Jim Bunion's face; and at first he would not speak. And then he said to me that it was like this: they had not paid for that crystal, but got it as their share of Jim Bunion's kit. If they had paid for it or given something in exchange to Bill Snyth that would have been all right, but they couldn't do that now because Bill was dead, and they were not sure if the old bargain might not hold good. And Hell must be a large and lonely place, and to go there alone must be bad, and so the three agreed that they would all stick together, and use the crystal all three or not at all, unless one died, and then the two would use it and the one that was gone would wait for them. And the last of the three to go would bring the crystal with him, or maybe the crystal would bring him. They didn't think, he said, they were the kind of men for Heaven, and he hoped they knew their place better than that, but they didn't fancy the notion of Hell alone; if Hell it had to be. It was all right for Bill Snyth, he was afraid of nothing. He had known perhaps five men that were not afraid of death, but Bill Snyth was not afraid of Hell. He died with a smile on his face like a child in its

sleep; it was drink killed poor Bill Snyth.

This was why I had beaten Bill Sloggs; Sloggs had the crystal on him while we played, but would not use it; these sailors seemed to fear loneliness as some people fear being hurt; he was the only one of the three who could play chess at all, he had learnt it in order to be able to answer questions and keep up their pretence, but he had learnt it badly, as I found. I never saw the crystal, they never showed it to anyone; but Jim Bunion told me that night that it was about the size that the thick end of a hen's egg would be if it were round. And then he fell asleep.

There were many more questions that I would have asked him but I could not wake him up. I even pulled the table away so that he fell to the floor, but he slept on, and all the tavern was dark but for one candle burning; and it was then that I noticed for the first time that the other two sailors had gone, no one remained at all but Jim Bunion and I and the sinister barman of that curious inn, and he, too, was asleep.

When I saw that it was impossible to wake the sailor I went out into the night. Next day Jim Bunion would talk of it no more; and when I went back to Stavlokratz I found him already putting on paper his theory about the sailors, which became accepted by chess-players, that one of them had been taught their curious gambit and the oth-

er two between them had learnt all the defensive openings as well as general play. Though who taught them no one could say, in spite of enquiries made afterwards all along the Southern Pacific.

I never learnt any more details from any of the three sailors, they were always too drunk to speak or else not drunk enough to be communicative. I seem just to have taken Jim Bunion at the flood. But I kept my promise, it was I that introduced them to the tournament, and a pretty mess they made of established reputations. And so they kept on for months, never losing a game and always playing for their pound a side. I used to follow them wherever they went merely to watch their play. They were more marvelous than Stavlokratz even in his youth.

But then they took to liberties such as giving their queen when playing first-class players. And in the end one day when all three were drunk they played the best player in England with only a row of pawns. They won the game all right. But the ball broke to pieces. I never smelt such a stench in all my life.

The three sailors took it stoically enough, they signed on to different ships and went back again to the sea, and the world of chess lost sight, forever I trust, of the most remarkable players it ever knew, who would have altogether spoiled the game.



THE SKEPTIC

By E. Belding Beach

I AM going to be married. To-night I gave my bachelor dinner. Perhaps I was the most hilarious because they filled my glass incessantly. I felt inspired with the penetrating wit of Dionysius and the lissome grace of Irene Castle. Now I remember who laughed loudest at my remarks, who continually motioned the waiters toward me. It was the brother of the bride. *I am worried!*



THE WASHING

By Rupert Cross

THERE is always one day of joy a week in the tenement backyard into which I look from my open window.

That day is Monday, the day when the wash is hung out. It is then that all the clothes get their regular holiday from the human body, when they dance on the wind, white, blue, red, pink, and chequered, washed clean, in the welcome sunshine.

They are glad to get away from the ugly bodies that they have concealed from sight.

They are so happy to be free for this one day. They swing together, hour after hour, like children on a back gate.

There on the radiating lines they welcome each other, floating about, and touching each other lightly.

Then there comes a whipping wind and they frolic madly and unpuritanically together . . . arms, legs, bodies, tails whirl and wrap around each other like corybantes celebrating the loose rites of some Pagan god . . .

And masculine and feminine *robes de nuit* mix shamelessly in the wind.

I see now that clothes are in reality pagan, and it is only the body that wears them which makes them seem decorous and ascetic . . .

Also, when they are put out alone together, they know nothing at all about caste and snobbishness . . .

The big, jolly-voiced negress who lives six flights up takes in washing . . . and with the pink pajamas and lingerée of ladies and gentlemen she mixes her own Jeremiah's stiff, blue overalls and red undershirt. And they wave happily together all on a common line.

But, along toward evening, after they have played together all day, and the pulleys creak as the lines are drawn in, they droop forlornly.

For one week more they must ape the bodies and persons of their wearers, and live lives that are conventional, snobbish, hypocritical — and sometimes . . . chaste.



JUST about the time the average man makes enough money to enjoy himself, some woman discovers he has enough money to get married.



GAMBLING is the perfect type of pleasure. It is a wedding of the desire to be idle with the desire to make money.



THE HAUNTING BEAUTY OF STRYCHNINE

A LITTLE-KNOWN TOWN OF UNEARTHLY BEAUTY VISITED BY

Christopher Morley

SLOWLY, reluctantly (rather like a *vers libre* poem) the quaint little train comes to a stand. Along the station platform each of the *fiacre* drivers seizes a large dinner-bell and tries to outring the others. You step from the railway carriage—and instantly the hellish din of those droschky bells faints into a dim, far-away tolling. Your eye has caught the superb sweep of the Casa Grande beetling on its crag. Over the sapphire canal where the old men are fishing for sprats, above the rugged scarp where the blue-bloused *ouvriers* are quarrying the famous champagne cheese, you see the Gothic transept of the Palazzio Ginricci, dour against a nacre sky. An involuntary tremolo eddies down your spinal marrow. The Gin Palace, you murmur. . . . At last you are in Strychnine.

Unnoted by Baedeker, unsung by poets, unrhapsodized by press agents—there lurks the little town of Strychnine in that far and untraveled corner where France, Russia and Liberia meet in an unedifying Zollverein. The strychnine baths have long been famous among physicians, but the usual ruddy tourist knows them not. The sorrowful ennui of a ten-hour journey on the B. V. D. *Chemise de fer* (with innumerable examinations of luggage), while it has kept out the contraband Swiss cheese which is so strictly interdicted, has also kept away the rich and garrulous tourist. But he who will endure to the end that tortuous journey among flat fields of rye and parsimony, will find himself well rewarded. The

long tunnel through Mondragone ends at length, and you find yourself on the platform with the droschky bells clanging in your ears and the ineffable majesty of the Casa Grande crag soaring behind the jade canal.

The air was chill, and I buttoned my surtout tightly as I stepped into the curious seven-wheeled *sforza* lettered *Hôtel Decameron*. We rumbled *andante espressivo* over the hexagonal cobbles of the Chaussee d'Arsenic, crossed the mauve canal and bent under the hanging cliffs of the cheese quarries. I could see the fishwives carrying great trays of lampreys and lam-brequins toward the fish market. It is curious what quaintly assorted impressions one receives in the first few minutes in a strange place. I remember noticing a sausage Kiosk in the *marktplatz* where a man in a white coat was busily selling hot icons. They are delivered fresh every hour from the Casa Grande (the great cheese cathedral) on the cliff.

The *Hôtel Decameron* is named after Boccaccio, who was once a bartender there. It stands in a commanding position on the Place Nouveau Riche overlooking the Casino and the odalisk erected by Edward VII in memory of his cure. After two weeks of the strychnine baths the merry monarch is said to have called for a corncob pipe and a plate of onions, after which he made his escape by walking over the forest track to the French frontier, although previous to this he had not walked a kilometer without a cane since

John Bull won the Cowes regatta. The *haut ton* of the section in which the Hôtel Decameron finds itself can readily be seen by the fact that the campanile of the Duke of Marmalade fronts on the rue Sauterne, just across from the barroom of the Hôtel. The antiquaries say there is an underground corridor between the two.

The fascinations of a stay in Strychnine are manifold. I have a weak heart, so I did not try the baths, although I used to linger on the terrace of the Casino about sunset to hear Tinpanni's band and eat a bronze bowl of Kerosini's gooseberry fool. I spent a great deal of my time exploring the chief glory of the town, the Casa Grande, which stands on the colossal crag honeycombed underneath with the shafts and vaults of the cheese mine. There is nothing in the world more entrancing than to stand (with a *vinai-grette* at one's nose) on the ramp of the Casa, looking down over the ochre canal, listening to the hoarse shouts of the workmen as they toil with pick and shovel, laying bare some particularly rich lode of the pale, citron-colored cheese which will some day make Strychnine a place of *pèlerinage* for all the world. *Pay homage to the fromage* is a rough translation of the motto of the town, which is carved in old Gothic letters on the apse of the Casa itself. Limberg, Gruyère, Alkmaar, Neufchâtel, Camembert and Hoboken—all these famous cheeses will some day pale into whey before the puissance of the Strychnine curd. I was signally honored by an express invitation of the

burgomaster to be present at a meeting of the Cheesemongers' Guild at the Rathaus. The Kurdmeister, who is elected annually by the town council, spoke most eloquently on the future of the cheese industry, and a curious rite was performed. Before the entrance of the ceremonial cheese, which is cut by the Kurdmeister himself, all those present donned oxygen masks similar to those devised by the English to combat the German poison-gas. And I learned that oxygen helmets are worn by the workmen in the quarries to prevent prostration.

It was with unfeigned regret that I found my fortnight over. I would gladly have lingered in the medieval cloisters of the Gin Palace, and sat for many mornings under the pistachio trees on the terrace sipping my *verre* of native wine. But duties recalled me to the beaten paths of travel, and once more I drove in the old-fashioned ambulance to catch my even more old-fashioned train. The B. V. D. trains only leave Strychnine when there is a stern wind, as otherwise the pungent fumes of the cheese carried in the luggage van are very obnoxious to the passengers. Some day some American efficiency expert will visit the town and teach them to couple their luggage van onto the rear of the train. But till then Strychnine will be to me, and to every other traveler who may chance that way, a fragrant memory.

And as you enter the tunnel, the last thing you see is the onyx canal and the old women fishing for lambrequins and palfreys.



A WOMAN is never happy unless she is convinced she is loved, and is even happier when she has convinced her lover that his passion is hopeless.



BEFORE marriage a woman's virtues are constantly paraded before the man. After marriage, he is shown his own faults.

THE END OF ILSA MENTEITH

By Lilith Benda

ON the outskirts of large cities almost invariably they are found—the long rows of commonplace little dwellings, generally two stories high, and with two flats to a story, all exactly alike, all erected under the astute eye of the real-estate magnate, who, catering to the middle classes, with the bait of middle-class appurtenances of luxury, draws his patronage from those who are called the brawn and sinew of great nations. They are highly genteel abodes, these rows of little houses resting just between the city boundaries and the suburbs. Clerks and tradesmen inhabit them with their families—people honest and unimpeachable, people of innumerable progeny, people who go to church, who celebrate on New Year's Eve, who dine in restaurants regularly each Saturday night, write letters upon public affairs to the newspapers, say "How well you're looking," over the telephone; women of cotton stockings and double chins, men of stern standards and dirty finger-nails—thrifty, humdrum, well-balanced folk.

In just such an orderly little abode, located on the outskirts of New York, one night at precisely ten minutes after ten, a revolver shot rang out. A woman had committed suicide. . . .

There followed a sudden flurry. The lady in question had been a divorcee of somewhat questionable repute, who, sprung of humble origin, had within ten years acquired four successive husbands, all of them wealthy, and all, it was rumored, made to turn over to her very substantial settlements in place of alimony, when the four successive divorce cases came up. The newspapers

made of her demise a nine-day sensation. The women in the neighborhood whispered; the men winked. The real-estate agents were worried, but strove successfully to hush the scandal. Within a short time tongues ceased wagging, and Ilsa Menteith, who invaded the domain of salubrious respectability to make her effective getaway, was speedily forgotten.

I

THE flat on the lower right of the house was occupied by a family of unlimited offspring and exemplary conduct, named McCabe.

A young doctor, blond and pink-cheeked, rang the McCabe bell on the day after the suicide and smiled with more than a touch of deference in his eyes upon the neat, gray-haired woman in curl-papers and gingham house-dress who opened the door. She was decidedly unattractive, the traces of erstwhile prettiness on her face only enhancing an effect as of damp, unpleasant decay, like that which emanates from flowers left in water to die—an effect which not even the spick-and-spanness of her attire, not even the cleanliness of her well-kept rooms, could quite efface. Nevertheless, the doctor contemplated her with genuine respect as together they entered the room where the patient lay.

It was the fledgling physician's first big case. One of Mrs. McCabe's children had undergone a dangerous operation, and during the long weeks when things hung in the balance, and the most painstaking nursing was required to meet the complications that arose, the

doctor had found, in this frail, aging woman a devotion so devoid of hysteria, a patience so unswerving, a judiciousness and self-control so adequate to the exigencies, as to astound him.

This morning, however, he was disquieted by a slight tension in her manner, a flush, as of delight, on her face. At the convalescent's bedside she was simply the efficient nurse he had come to know, but once in the hallway, as she touched his arm and led him into her bedroom, he quivered and blushed. The young doctor was keenly susceptible to external impressions, and acutely affected by them. He had been in practice only a year, but had learnt already to recognize the signs of approaching confidence from middle-aged women, to gauge at its value the look of anticipatory gusto on their faces, and he was as yet unable sympathetically to comment upon the gynecological details so rapturously disclosed without the color rising on his fair, young face.

Unquiet, he awaited a tale of symptoms and sufferings. But she surprised him by pointing upward:

"You've heard about that woman, doctor? That Ilsa Menteith?"

He nodded. And seating herself in a straight-backed chair, eyes glistening with the gluttony of gossip, she took a breath deep enough to last through a long discourse, and launched into a torrent of words:

"Fine goings-on for a respectable neighborhood! To think of a woman like that right here in a house where there's nobody that's not decent! Right here among our sons and husbands! A woman of ill fame, for that's what she was, and the worst kind of a one, inveiglin' men into marriage to get their money, and then divorcin' them one after the other. None of us here suspected who she was. You couldn't have told it to look at her—she wasn't even pretty, and dressed quiet, too. Always with her red head in the air, and smiling like she was some queen! I knew why she done it—it was remorse, that's all. She saw decent people and little

children around here, and it made her repent and make off with herself. Divine justice, that's what it was! She got her deserts all right, but"—a look of foiled vengeance shot from the faded eyes—"she didn't get enough of 'em! She got off too easy, the jade. Her kind makes my blood boil—the kind that covers up their sinful doings by marriage, and thinks they're so much grander than honest, decent folks. An out-and-out fast woman we can find out, and show up, and make 'em suffer and reform, and turn respectable. . . . But to think that one got off so easy. It—it isn't fair."

Mrs. McCabe broke off abruptly, and looked up into the doctor's vague, troubled face. Something there arrested her. She appeared for a moment to ponder, and presently he saw the wrath of thwarted vengeance fade from her face, to be replaced by the composed look he had met always at his patient's bedside.

"Maybe you don't understand, doctor," she went on slowly, and in softer tones, "I guess only a woman, and a respectable woman, can understand. We respectable women can't tolerate jades like that, with their heads in the air, and their smiles. Our heads ain't in the air, we don't smile any too much. . . . I've had nine children, and it's a lot of trouble and pain and time, havin' children—she had none, and she never kept house, or worked, or done any of the things a wife ought to do to earn her keep. And I've cooked for my family all these years; I've scrubbed and done the washing when we couldn't afford a washwoman, and I seen that my children went to church and dancing school. Gave 'em a good education, too, and kept cultured myself. I belong right now to a literary club connected with the Sunday school. Culture—that's the most important thing of all! Well, I been a good wife and mother, and there's many another like me, and it's not fair for women like her upstairs to have had all she's had, and then slip off so easy with 'er head in the air! I was good-looking myself once, but

work kills all that, although—well, Mr. McCabe still says” . . . She simpered a little, and stopped.

The doctor had learnt how to hide a look of amusement under an interested smile. Noting it, immediately she became eased and expatiatory, ready to reveal secrets not at all germane to medicine, the secrets bosom friends and husbands never hear, which women pour into their physician's ears.

“I saw him, doctor, through the key-hole—that night,” she whispered dramatically, “I made it my business to see him, for I was just beginning to suspect her with her fine airs! I made it a point to know who comes to see all the tenants. He was the first visitor she had here. Doctor, I'm sure of it”—she rose, approached him, and breathed her conviction into his ear—“that night she brought sin right into this respectable house! And after she done it, she was sorry. She killed herself in remorse. I know it, because I saw him—a wicked looking man, he was. The kind you don't want your daughters to go out with. The kind that waylays young girls. I just got a peek at him, but his sin was in his eyes. And he looked ready for more prey. I—I was scared, even behind the locked door.”

She faced him, indignant virtue battling with pleasurable excitement in her eyes. The doctor endeavored to smile even more sympathetically, and at the same time to back out of the room. But his smile was his destruction. It invited to confidence, and the woman's eyes lit.

“Sin and love's not the same thing. Now in my case, doctor”—In dread expectancy he shuffled his feet—

—And broke out into a sweat of agony, as, after a tremendous anticipatory inhalation, she launched forth without niggardliness into gynecological mysteries, occult obstetrics, esoterics of the connubial state, expounded in such detail and so dramatically evoked as to smite the man of medicine as with a sense of vicarious guilt. . . .

Even after a year of practice he remained a romantic, and in anguish, his eyes roved, as with alert ears he awaited

the first indication of waning breath control. When for only an instant she paused, he broke out into a feeble shout:

“Yes, yes, Mrs. McCabe. Maternity's a beautiful thing!” Discreetly, determinedly, he edged door-wise.

“I'm glad you're one man thinks so. Most of 'em's got hankering for Jezebels like her upstairs. Children and culture—they're the most important things. Now just before I had my eldest”—

“Maternity—a beautiful” . . . In exultant despair his voice drowned hers, and, backing through the doorway, with a vague, uneasy wave of his arm, he pointed by chance to a print of the Sistine Madonna hanging over the bed.

“Isn't it, doctor?” Her voice softened; the gluttoned look went out of her eyes; with something of awe in her face she contemplated the picture. “Nice painting, isn't it? I'm very fond of high art, and make it a point to study it, and always keep cultivated. That's the Raphael Madonna, you know.”

II

WHILE they were bearing the remains of the *felo de se* from the house, two young women, one with a fat, healthy baby gurgling in her arms, stood at a window of the flat at the upper right, and watched the grim procession. Both appeared under twenty; both were wide-eyed, pink-cheeked, and innocent looking. The little room they stood in was tastefully furnished in an inexpensive, instalment-plan fashion. A fresh wholesomeness entirely devoid of viscosity pervaded the place, a wholesomeness suggestive of young life, young love, young ignorance untrammelled by the onerousness of ideas.

“Oh, dear,” the little mother chirruped, as she shifted her baby from one arm to the other. “Oh, dear, but it's funny watching 'em carry her out that way, for all the world like they used to carry you, Irene, after a shindy, at five in the morning, when you couldn't navigate any more.”

The other tossed her pretty head: “Well, anyhow, if I can't stand my

grog, at least I always keep my sense. Now you, Lily, if you hadn't had me to take care of you, many's the time you'd have given your last cent, and the last ring off your fingers, to any cabaret singer or professional dancer you happened to be sticky about. Remember the time!"—

"Never mind that," the first interrupted, tossing the infant high into the air to hear its laughter, "I believe he's cutting another tooth, Irene. Look here."

But the other, her eyes a little wistful, shook her head.

"You've been married over a year now, Lily. Tell me, don't you ever want to get back at the game?"

"I should say not."

"Then why do you always want me to come to see you, and tell you what the crowd's doing, when you know your husband don't like to have me here?"

"I don't know," the first laughed, rattling a toy to amuse the child. "It's just kind of like reading a story, or seeing an exciting play, now—to have you tell me what they're all doing. But I'm as happy as I can be. I'm tickled to death with marriage, and my husband, and my baby. And do you know what, Irene? I'm particularly tickled to death right this minute, now I've seen 'em carry the Menteith woman out that way."

"Why?" While she reached for her hat, the other meditatively rouged her lips at the mantel mirror.

"Oh, because"—the little mother's mouth hardened—"it's not the wives and the families, it's her kind that makes life hard for the rest of us. Holding her head up, and thinking herself so awful respectable and above everybody! Walking like some empress, when she was no better than any of us. Grabbing the kale, and the husbands, and off on yachts when we were washing our own stockings in hall bedrooms! I didn't know who she was, but I saw her pass two or three times. . . . She thought she was so almighty grand and clever. It makes me sick to think of it! Well, she got hers at the end like any other Jane. And it

tickles me to death to think that here I am with a husband, and a baby, and a nice home, and nobody suspecting anything,—and I'll see that they never suspect,—while she with her haughty ways cashed in at the finish like any other third-class rounder. . . . And all because of a John who threw her down!"

"What do you mean, threw her down?" Interested, the other turned from the mirror.

"I'll tell you. . . . The night it happened, Freddie called me up at ten o'clock. He was delayed late at work. I had to go downstairs to the 'phone. That's the only thing I don't like about this house, there's no private 'phones. I had on my pink kimono, and if I do say it, I look good in kimonos. Well, I saw the man. He was just coming out,—the only man she ever had to see her here. Take it from me, he was there some. You know the kind,—the kind you'd sneak away from a wine racket to drink nickel beers at Danny Clancy's with. And the way he looked at me—sort of bored but interested! Say, I tell you I know he'd just given her a good, proper squelch of a throw-down. And it makes me feel fine, Irene. It makes up for the hall bedrooms. She thought she was such a wonder, but the night she quit I got a ve-ry much taken look from the John who threw her down. . . . Say, Irene, you'd better hurry. Freddie'll be home soon, and you know he don't like me to have you here."

"I'm going." With a sigh the other took up her handbag. "But, you know, I think you're hard on that Menteith woman just because you're happy, Lily. I feel sorry for the poor thing. It's awful the way all the nice chaps throw a girl down. I guess she was tired of those rich husbands, and wanted to marry somebody she liked. I guess she asked him, and they always balk at that, the nice ones,—not meaning anything against your Freddie, only. . . . Remember Gus? I've been running around with him off and on for three years. He had a birthday last month,

and I spent twelve of my last eighteen-fifty for a present. Pajamas it was,—all pink silk stripes. I guess he thought I had intentions. I guess he thought I was hinting at the honeymoon, and the old fourteen karat band,—and I guess I was, at that. Haven't seen him since. . . . I'd like to marry someone I liked, and settle down. I suppose that poor dead thing did, too."

She sighed again, and kissed the baby. "Well, good-bye, Lily, call me up some time."

III

In the flat on the lower left dwelt one Matthew Sylvester Jennings, a mild little man of excessive corpulence, a resigned, henpecked little old man, too ositant ever to protest against anything. A shop in which he dealt in tame household pets, a wife yclept Lucretia with a cast in her eye, and no waist-line, a black Siamese cat he called Aspasia, and a shelf of books, four of which, "Hamlet," a General Anthropology, a Complete Zoology, and a collection of William Blake's illustrations to the Book of Job, lay always at his side when, night after night, he sat in ponderous immobility, smoking his pipe,—these Matthew Sylvester Jennings possessed. All other worldly goods the invitate Lucretia had appropriated,—bank account, insurance policy, the very state of his soul.

Upon the heavy layers of fat which, save where the lines of a good chin defiantly proclaimed themselves, and where, among rolls of adipose tissue, two vivid blue eyes peered through slits, seemed to enwrap his whole personality as in the folds of a Persian yashmak, Lucretia looked approvingly. But with grimness she would contemplate both the cat Aspasia, an animal abominated, but tolerated withal, and a massive patriarch, her husband's boon companion, a creature likewise tolerated with abomination. For, with a sort of inanimate, milk-and-water stubbornness, Matthew Sylvester Jennings clung to his cat, and his friend. All the disapprobation of

Lucretia could not remove Aspasia from his knee; all her acid expostulations availed not a whit when it came to the subject of the patriarch's bi-weekly visits.

On the evenings when he was expected, always at the stroke of eight, an additional tinge of sourness overspread her crabbed features. But invariably she fetched a jug of claret, the only beverage she permitted, and a tobacco jar, set them on the table with a ferocious bang, and, as at precisely five minutes after eight the door-bell rang, retired into the kitchen for an hour, when, with her reappearance, the two old men stirred, rose heavily, and shook hands in silence.

Massive and tall, the great, white beard which fell to his waist gave the patriarch an effect of infinite magnanimity. He sat always in the same attitude, chin sunken, eyes raised, one elbow on the arm of his chair, with the hand extended and unconsciously assuming the position of blessing used by priests of the Latin church. As he sipped his claret, he seemed to invest it with the augustness of consecrated wine. As he puffed at his pipe, Matthew Sylvester Jennings was reminded of the illustrations to the Book of Job,—Blake's pictures of a dispassionate deity blowing hurricanes over a sin-ridden world. He suggested omnipotence, omniscience. He looked at once benignant and all-terrible. . . . And when he spoke it was in the squeaking falsetto of senile disintegration.

Three days after the suicide the old men met. For some time they sat smoking in the silence wontedly maintained. Both were men of few words. The patriarch, moreover, was afflicted with extreme deafness, which precluded facile confabulation, since it was only with difficulty that his host could force a voice much above a wheezy whisper, while audibility to the sharp ears in the kitchen neither desired. Nor was it often that their eyes met. Matthew Sylvester Jennings' were habitually lowered meditatively, his friend's lifted as in rapt contemplation. Ordinarily they

spent their hour of communion, sipping their wine, smoking their pipes, with scarce a word exchanged.

This evening, however, there was a tension in the air. The nature of the suicide, the prominence the newspapers had given it, caused even these two to feel a stir. Presently they looked at one another. It was in the flat above that Ilsa Menteith had died. Significantly the patriarch rolled his dark eyes to the ceiling, and, in a sort of vehement squeak:

"Why?" he queried.

Matthew Sylvester Jennings at first made no reply. His eyes fell slowly, and as if with great difficulty, he laid his pipe on the table, and folded his hands. Each one of his gestures, every movement, the very play of his lips when speaking, seemed to accomplish themselves only after infinite care and deliberation. It was as if his unwieldy ponderosity were an alien substance folded about him, a something as incongruous to his real personality as to his vivid blue eyes and good chin,—a something obtrusive and distressing which impeded his movements, checked smooth utterance, interfered with the workings of his brain.

Very slowly now the puffy lips parted. Very slowly he leaned toward his friend. And then suddenly, with astonishing rapidity, one word piled pell-mell upon the other.

"She had big green eyes," he panted, in a sibilant monotone, "and red hair. She was beautiful. She had a sunny smile,—this Ilsa Menteith. The very day she did it—in the vestibule—I saw her. She was beautiful. . . . She should be denied decent burial,—she should be drawn, and quartered, and fed to wild beasts. She did a terribly immoral thing. She committed the one unpardonable sin. Anybody is an unspeakable criminal who deprives the world of a lovely woman in her prime,—so long as ugly-tempered women with casts in their eyes exist."

Confused and fatigued at the unprecedentedly long speech, he passed a hand across his forehead, and sank back

into his customary lethargy, the mobile eyes alone betraying an inner unrest. His friend still stared ecstatically into the ceiling. The cat *Aspasia* leaped upon his knee. And, passing a cumbersome hand over her sleek coat, very gradually his lips parted again.

"I am a man of imagination,"—scarcely above a whisper he spoke now, with a certain weighty deliberation, and tardiness, as if his utterance were behindhand, were but an echo of a mind working always far in advance of his words,—*"Imagination is a bane; it galls and wounds when one is fat and lazy and easily imposed upon. Activity? Impossible. Achievement? Absurd. Love? Ridiculous. Speech? Difficult,—only this strange event upstairs spurs me to it to-night. . . . But nevertheless I am a man of imagination. I have my God, my books, and my animals, and love them as my William Blake loved his God, his books, and his animals. And then, too, I have my women . . ."*

Guardedly he glanced, first at the patriarch whose fixed gaze never altered, then toward the kitchen, and presently, laying his hand affectionately on the General Anthropology, droned on:

"I have my women,—here . . . here,"—he tapped the volume significantly,—*"most men have their mistresses in the flesh and turn to the poets to have them in the spirit, too. I have them in the spirit, and turn to my Anthropology to have them in the flesh."*

"This Ilsa Menteith was beautiful," he went on, his voice sinking even lower, *"civilization coarsens women. Only among a few savage races do you find the refined, feline types. There are pictures of them,—in here. . . . What's uglier than a civilized woman's leg? Great, clumsy, conical thing, humpy at the top, ending in knock-knees. The masculine thigh is columnar, and so, for instance, the Javanese girl's; narrow hips, too,—fine shoulders, long legs, long arms, long hands, long feet, long, slim fingers . . . litheness . . . slenderness,—fine points, fine points! These*

doughy, civilized women,—faugh! But Ilsa Menteith was beautiful,—she was like a savage, like a cat. . . .

"Woman is very seldom feline," he went on after a pause. "Why do people continually cast aspersions upon the loveliest animals in existence by comparing them to women? A well-rounded woman continually writhing and twisting, half-closing her eyes, and trying to look inscrutable,—is she like a cat? Some tabby with many a litter to her credit, perhaps . . . but bovine, rather—bovine,—a cow with the blind staggers! The fine specimen of feline, like my Aspasia here, is a gourmet, an aesthete, a masculine beast, the most masculine of animals. The fine specimens suggest long, lean men, decadent aristocrats, high-bred indolents, subtle, bored, indifferent, dispassionate souls. . . . But this Ilsa Menteith, I saw her only once or twice, but she was beautiful like a cat. . . . Why did she do it, you ask?"

The patriarch continued to stare up into the overhead unattainable. And now the voice of Matthew Sylvester Jennings grew even fainter, fell into a stifled whisper, seemed to come from an immense distance, as if the essence of his personality were struggling once to express itself against awful, and hitherto victorious odds.

"Why did she do it? I am a man of imagination,—I know, I know. I saw the man, you know, as he went out at the door a few minutes before it happened. I saw a great sadness,—and weariness, and aloofness. He was hurrying, and absent-minded. He almost knocked me down. He had a sensitive mouth and fine eyes,—small, grey, keen. It was the face of an extraordinary man. And it was the face of a man who loves, because it was the face of a man brooding upon things bigger than love, a book he was writing, perhaps, or some great enterprise,—or, who knows, perhaps even an animal store. It was the face of a man who had been profoundly moved, and I know he had been moved by her,—not to pity, not to desire, but to things bigger than she, bigger than love itself."

Faintly in his chair, Matthew Sylvester Jennings stirred. Very slowly his eyes opened so that the big, blue irises completely revealed themselves, giving, as it seemed, a passing glimpse of the real man. His voice sank now to a well-nigh inaudible whisper, but with a suggestion of energy and power behind it.

"I who have never seen it know the face of the man who loves. Through my animals I know it. What are the animal sounds dear to lovers? The buzzing of bees in midsummer, the crooning of frogs, the cooing of doves. And why?—Because to them all there is an unchanging, never-ceasing note, a something lulling, soothing, indefinite, unending,—a something with an eternal quality. And that's what love means to an extraordinary man. Something eternal in its very evanescence, something gentle and not disturbing to bigger things. He loved her, and that's why she did it!

"Do you see, do you understand, my friend? He loved her, and with his love, this woman of husbands and sordid affairs attained her apex. She reached the empyreal zenith, and so,—"

"Why?"

In his quavering treble, the patriarch, seated massive and still, as if planning the destinies of countless generations, broke in.

"A sad case, that, upstairs," he continued. "What do you make of it, Matthew?"

The venerable man finally lowered his eyes from the ceiling, blinked stupidly, looked blank, and put his hand to his ear the more readily to catch a reply. . . . Throughout his discourse, Matthew Sylvester Jennings had failed sufficiently to reckon with his friend's excessive deafness.

His pudgy face reddened slowly as he realized he had been addressing unhearing ears. In complete exhaustion he fell back into his chair. Now his voice was inaudible. His lips scarce moved.

"My Blake's Deity in the flesh afflicted with deafness! My Mad William's Jehovah incarnate squeaking in

the tones of octogenerian decrepitude! A god who listens as if attentively, and hears not a word. . . . Perhaps,—why not . . . I am a man of imagination . . .”

Grim, determined, just then his wife came into the room. The two old men stirred, rose ponderously, and in silence shook hands.

IV

“HULLO, Ilsa.”

“Hello, there, master musician. Awfully nice of you to’ve come.”

Throughout her meteoric career Ilsa Menteith had been the topic of club-room confabulation entered upon in an attempt exactly to define her attraction, and ending invariably in puzzled shrugs. There are women made for laughter, or for languor, for speech, eye-play, lithe movement, anodynous repose,—lovely women who, realizing the potency of their most salient asset, propel it unerringly in the grace of a gesture, the dart of a lambent orb. None of her attributes could be designated the Menteith’s most living charm, neither the timbre of her carolling laugh, the poise of her carriage, nor her green eyes’ chatoyant allure. Many another damsel possessing charms, of equiponderant value exhaled in composite with far more finesse, many another wittier, tenderer, more beautiful, more adequately equipped to outdazzle, outpassion, outmaneuver, had lost in emulative joust to this fiery-haired woman of little guile.

Her most obvious attractions she seemed deliberately to belittle, intentionally to expunge. A supple body, slender to a fault, was never permitted the sinuosity it suggested. No one had ever extolled her green eyes as mystic; for all their undulant luminosity, her wide-open gaze was direct and ingenuous as the glance of an unsophisticated boy. Without a tinge of color there was yet no deadness to her nacreous skin,—it irradiated life, and joy, while, rather than a wound, the curled scarlet lips suggested something artless, something candid and engaging. Ac-

couted by nature for the rôle of an inscrutable enchantress, she chose to play another part, and, without entirely obliterating the maternal and infantile, emphasized the good-fellow note so successfully that with her entrance into a room crowded with more beautiful women, even the man propense to diminutive daintiness with his desire’s embodiment seated beside him, even the man who sought languishing opulence, and was looking into its eyes, turned to her with more than interest on their faces.

Oddly enough, too, despite her manifold attractions, the many who had sought in vain for her favor never developed any of the chagrin of disgruntled suitors, while, as for her quondam spouses, none of the four had been known ever to speak disparagingly of her either before or after the rupture. Hers was a charm light, volatile and excessively engaging, in no wise suggestive of profundities and violent amours. And she herself had once declared that it was her pride never in her life to have inspired a profound and lasting passion. At the time that her fourth divorce was being made the chief topic of club-room gossip, her first husband discussed her among a circle of friends in a fashion all present adjudged conclusive and eminently fair.

“She’s untrammelled with soul,” he declared, “and that’s her chief charm. She has red hair and green eyes, but she’s not temperamental. Her name is Ilsa, but she’s not temperamental. There’s something feline about her, and yet she’s not temperamental. No sooner you see her come in at a door with her wide-open smile and blithe eyes, but you think, ‘Here’s a ripping good sportsman.’ She wouldn’t look at any but an affluent suitor, but what difference does that make? I know perfectly well that she wouldn’t have considered me for a moment if the coffers hadn’t been brim full, and I like her none the less for that. She made an excellent wife for the time being, and knew when the game was up. She’s not the sort to pursue you when you’re

finished, or throw you over before you are, not the sort to exact adherence after things begin to pall, nor yet the sort that affects heart agony, and depths, and other tiresome things. She's simply the kind one plays around with for a few stimulating years, and then quits in mutual good-will. And she knows it, is content with her part, and plays the game well, like a clever business woman. Never negotiates a bargain sale, on the one hand, and never goes in for fleecing, on the other. Extraordinarily refreshing, that woman. Would there were more Ilsas!"

In the fluttering candle-light she was standing now, erect as always, eyes flashing their laughter at the man who faced her. That she was not strictly beautiful never struck any but women in her presence, and in no wise troubled her. The jaws and chin were a little too heavy, but successfully counterbalanced by the insouciance of a slightly tip-tilted nose. The eyes a trifle too large, the lips a trifle too full, every defect of feature was completely annihilated by the impression she gave of dazzling, joyous luminosity. This evening a trailing gown of old-gold chiffon enswathed her entirely, so high at the throat as to touch her chin and ears, and with sleeves falling well below the wrists.

"Oh, Chris," she carolled, "it's droll seeing you so awfully well-dressed, and suave looking, and everything. Who'd think that five years ago you went in for Byron collars, and Italian table-d'hôtes, and life missions, and such things? I admit I've missed my guess, —never dreamt the youth who wanted to steer me from worldly standards would ever escape from his pseudo-aesthetic rut. And here you are, America's first and only master composer, serving us Debussy virilized à la Strauss, austered à la Brahms, gayed up à la Ravel, and,—well made awfully novel and winning à la Christopher Ritchie whom I once threw down. . . . Splendid!"

She had a habit of topping her speeches with a "Splendid!" At the

word her voice throbbed and rang out, while her eyes sparkled with more brilliance. It was as if the sense of enjoyment she imparted to her every utterance, her every look, were epitomized in the way she caressed the word.

The man smiled. Prematurely grey, and with a slight stoop to his shoulders, he was distinguished looking in an unobtrusive way suggestive at once of softness and underlying adamant. Lips somewhat full and indefinite proclaimed an indolence at odds with the trenchancy that shot from penetrant grey eyes.

"Want to grog it up a bit?" She pointed to the table where whiskey and soda bottles stood. He nodded, and indicating that he should play host, she sat watching him, her lips parted, her chin pillowed in her hands.

"Do you know, it's most awfully nice and like you, Chris, to have done what I asked in my note. It's an unholy journey up here to the city limits, but I wanted so badly to see you. Tell me, were you surprised to hear from me? Pleased? Annoyed? And why have you come as I asked you,—I, whom you haven't seen for five years, and who threw you down?"

He passed her glass and lit a cigarette before answering:

"I came because I'd do anything in the world for you, Ilsa, which didn't interfere with something I'd rather do. Because quite the kindest deed ever done me was your abrupt dismissal five years ago."

"And I asked you to call, because tonight I wanted to see the only potential life-mate I've ever rejected. Tell me, Chris,—I'm curious. How long did you feel crushed after I turned you down in favor of spouse number three? How long did the rancour last?"

"One day of anguish," he answered after a moment, "another of unhappiness, three full of schemes for vengeance, five of vague unrest. Ten days, Ilsa."

"And then what,—another girl?"

"Not immediately. Then I discarded the Byron collar and had a hair-cut.

Went to work, too,—on a symphonic poem, if I remember rightly. Miserable, immature mess it was, but nevertheless the first significant thing I'd ever—"

"Chris," she broke in laughing, "you don't mean to tell me I was your inspiration?" Leaning across the table, she laid her fingers lightly on his hand.

"*A chaque saint so chandelle*," he replied, contemplating her perfectly manicured nails. "I was twenty-five,—high time to be done with mooning adolescence, and get down to work. You taught me the incidental charm of women, and instead of letting me grow gradually tired, you were kind enough to refuse me, and left behind, after the first few days, a pleasant memory. Thanks awfully."

"That's just what I, too, have to say," she commented. "Thanks awfully, Chris. I've never been really in love, but I came closest to it with you. Thanks for having been long-haired and unkempt looking. Thanks for having disparaged my mundane aims. Thanks even for those dreadful jade earrings you gave me,—you remember? As if my hair and eyes weren't enough to contend with, without having exotic, erotic jade earrings thrust upon me! If you hadn't done these ridiculous things I should have fallen in love with you, for you're the kind my sort falls in love with. There's a bit of the fascinating cad about you for all your gentle mouth. And you saved me from falling for *amanis de coeur*,—they're as fatal as woman confidantes. Thanks!"

For a moment there was silence.

"How old are you?" he queried finally.

"Thirty-one."

"And you're telling me that in all these years I was your nearest approach to a genuine *amant de coeur*, that the four moneyed maintainers were the only favored ones?"

"Absolutely."

"H'm." He eyed her reflectively, the furrows of a slight frown indicating themselves on his forehead. "I believe you and dislike believing you. At any rate, why vaunt any such prudery? I'd

imagine it a dubious asset; I'd imagine that even the open-eyed purchaser of costly wares would hesitate at such unswerving allegiance to Mammon. . . . Smacks a bit of the third-rate."

She withdrew her hand. "You're silly. What do I want with lovers? All my inclinations and capacities were for the marriage game played, with changing partners, on a big scale. And I've stuck to my craft. . . . Come, Chris, don't look so disapproving."

He checked his frown and smiled. "I suppose there's your side to consider as well. *Au bon chat bon rat*. But don't you ever grow tired of the steady diet of roast beef and potatoes, and—"

"Pine for sugar and cream? Emphatically I do not. And give me credit at least for consistency. You know you quoted before this evening. *A chaque saint so chandelle*."

"And I'll quote again. *Caveat emptor*."

"Meaning?"

"Let the buyer be careful."

Even while her smile flashed, it lost a little of its sunniness, and her eyes narrowed slightly.

"Take care, Ilsa," he cautioned, "at this moment your expression tends to the sphinx-like you despise."

At his words she sprang to her feet and, leaning over the table toward him, laughed softly, mockingly.

"I was almost angry,—and it's very, very seldom that I get angry. Come, come, Chris, your remark was cheap. The buyers haven't been cautious, didn't need to be, and never regretted not having been. . . . There's a streak of the prude in you still. Nothing is more puzzling to me than the way men, notably without moral scruples, grow crotchety over what they call legalized courtzeanship. You get away from commonplace standards only to adopt them in another form. You make yourself a censor of immorals! Because I've always been quite respectably married, because I'm not sentimental, because it's been altogether pleasant, and I've had no heartaches and sufferings

and *grandes passions*, then,—let the buyer be careful. I'm crafty and nasty and liable to trick him!

"I'd been brought up in penury," she went on, lightly, "had no taste for it, and determined very early to put a lot of zest and care into the pursuit of avoiding it. I admit freely that I've been out for the money from the start. I got me my husbands, all of them likable and excessively affluent chaps who enjoyed a few placid, respectable years with me as greatly as I did, and were complimentary enough to think it was worth the expenditures involved. . . . And let me tell you, you censor of immorals,—I've never ruined a man, never broken a man's heart, never uprooted a family, nor fleeced inordinately, never reproached, nor annoyed, nor clung when I was no longer wanted, never played the Tartuffe. There's a record for you! And on the other hand, I've never been hungry, nor ill-clad, nor unhappy. I've never played around with an out-and-out boob no matter what he was worth; never had anything but a very enjoyable time, and parted from each successive liege lord with a whacking good settlement, and not a trace of ill-will on either side! How's that for a record? Life's just been one *entente cordiale* after another. . . . Splendid! . . . And what have you to say to that, you censor of immorals?"

Her underlids were quivering. Her smile grew even more expansive and inviting. She walked around the table, and stood before him.

"Only that indignation suits you. You look very lovely to-night, Ilsa."

"Bother that!" With a toss of her head she backed away, and paced the floor, her eyes always on him, over her shoulder when her back was turned, full in his face, and glittering, as she approached. She walked very lightly, noiselessly, rapidly, her chin always high over the slender neck, lips always parted, big, even, milky teeth shining. The flickering candle-light cast an iridescence over her face, and the man who sat watching her, immobile and

composed, followed with his sharp, grey eyes her every movement.

"I must try to convince you," she halted abruptly, and poised herself on the arm of his chair. "You look so sneerily disapproving as if I were some poor fool who had missed the vim of life. I've had my thrills, Chris—no nightingales, and roses, and Swiss chalet episodes, but I've had my thrills. Husband hunting is a tremendously exciting pursuit. When the victim's a bit wary. . . . To break down little by little the wall of only half-assumed indifference, to get him to talk, to argue, to look at you, to be interested. And then to watch for the next stage: the stupid ones tell you you're the only woman who understands them, the nice ones impress upon you how completely they understand and see through you. And there,—then . . . the crucial moment! It's stupendously stirring finally to hear the little break in the voice you've been waiting for, to touch the hands, and find them warm with just the finger-tips icy. Nothing nasty about it,—I don't particularly fancy troglodytic ardor,—but something a little tender, and reverent, and gentle. . . . And to know you've inspired it! It's tremendous,—as stimulating as listening to 'Ein Heldenleben' or some such thing must be to you. . . . And what have you to say to that, censor of immorals?"

"Only that old-gold chiffon makes for seductiveness, and you're bewitching by candle-light. But why the enswathement, Ilsa? All evening I've been wondering what made you seem a bit different, and it just struck me. Where are the dazzling neck and shoulders I remember of old? In altruism, why conceal the ornamental arms?"

For the first time her smile faded entirely. She darted a searching glance at him, and shifted her eyes.

"But I look as nice as ever? The unwonted,—er,—suppression of facts detracts, perhaps?"

"Not a whit."

"Good! Splendid!" From her face the fleeting shadow passed. She caught

his hand in hers and suddenly laughed.

"He extols my allure, and seems a bit taken, but his hands are as cool and non-committal as a nice, crisp lettuce leaf. Turned ascetic, Chris?"

"No, but I'm broke and sad." Her hand still in his, he looked her over appraisingly. "You're certainly in form, Ilsa. But why the expended energy when you know symphonies aren't lucrative. Surely you don't consider me a potential fifth?"

She moved as if to lay her head on his shoulder, but quickly checked herself.

"Poor old Chris! Horrid thing, indigence, isn't it? I'm having a taste of it myself now."

He turned away, and glanced questioningly about the little room. Despite such impedimenta as ugly wall paper, and a built-in mantel of cheap wood, an agreeable, if by no means extraordinary effect had been produced. A buhl table aired its graces. On the wall he recognized a good Toulouse-Lautrec, under his feet an excellent if usual, Kermanshah. There were soft colored draperies hung about,—a couch covered with gay cushions, a pair of Barye bronzes. No bulbs were lit under the hideous colored-glass dome, and the two tall candles in wrought-iron sticks enhanced the room's good points.

"And why the sudden penury, Ilsa? Why—this?" He waved his hands to indicate the surroundings.

"Because I'm poor now. Because the place is cheap, and moreover, clean, which the cheap places with,—you know, atmosphere and fireplaces and things, never are. Because for the last year I've been flinging away the rewards of thrift as lavishly as ever I could."

"Why?"

"Oh, just because!" she retorted quickly. "Let's not talk about it. Let's return to our discussion. I don't fancy your condemnation of all my theories of life. I want to convince—"

"And I insist upon knowing," he cut in. "You've aroused my curiosity. Why

the cessation of activities, and the flat in the Bronx? Why—"

"And I refuse to go on with the subject." Bending over him from the arm of the chair, she laid her fingers on his lips. . . .

Just then one of the candles sputtered, and went out. . . .

And, in a flash, the atmosphere changed. The street noises ceased abruptly, as if intermitted by the subtle influence, which as they looked into one another's faces, she as animated, he as collected as before, brought to her smile a quality of hesitant timidity, eradicated the softness about his lips, supplemented, with a mellifluent glow, the mordancy of his eyes. It was a trivial incident,—the extinction of a candle, but, with the dimmed light, an impalpable tenseness stole over them. Her face was in shadow; he saw only the glints in her russet hair, only the pellucid whiteness of the hand she withdrew slowly from his lips. After some minutes of absolute stillness, a little uneasily she stirred, and started to rise.

And as she stirred, the tension broke. With a quick movement he made to take her in his arms.

"Don't!" Her voice was a half gasp. With almost ferocious sinuosity, she eluded him, and sprang to her feet. He, too, rose.

"You're full of surprises, Ilsa. Why the virtuous indignation? Going in for grubbing and coyness as well as poverty these days?"

"Don't, Chris." She made the mistake of lifting her head a trifle too high, of rendering her voice the decisive trifle too imperious.

"Rot!" In perfect equanimity, collected, tranquil, he faced her. She appeared to take courage at his composure, laughed uncertainly, started to cross the room. And at her first step with a quick, rough gesture he caught her to him.

"Don't, I tell you."

Piercingly her voice rang out this time, and, lifting her hands to his shoulders with a sudden outburst of unexpected energy which took him by sur-

prise, landed him back into the arm-chair, an undignified, ridiculous figure.

"Don't!" she reiterated in a whisper.

A flush of anger flooded his face. "Very good, *casta diva*, I won't, never fear. Far be it from me to curtail even the most sporadic attack of the virtues. But I don't find them particularly amusing. One more guzzle,—" he filled a whiskey glass, and emptied it in a swallow,—"and I'll leave you in vestal security."

"But I don't want you to go just yet, Chris." Full of inveighing self-confidence, she half blocked his way. But with a courteous "Sorry," he slipped past, and, as she followed him out of the room, reached for his hat.

"But I don't want you to go. Don't be childish. You don't understand. . . ."

Persuasively she brought her smiling face close to his. "It's not disinclination or coquetry, dear. It's just—" suddenly her trilling laughter rang out,—"just bones, Chris!"

She ran her fingers along neck and shoulders. "Here,—and here,—and here,—all bones, and hollows, and ridges, and ugliness! I couldn't bear to have you touch them. That's why the high collar and the long sleeves. That's why the termination of activities. Oh, Chris, isn't it droll?" she carolled gleefully, "the damphool doctors,—they say I'm to *mimi-camille*!"

For an instant incredulity, and then blank astonishment inundated his face, as he stared at her standing before him, irradiate of life and joy.

"What's—what's this?" he stammered at last.

"Phthisis and tuberoses, nothing less, dear fellow." Motioning him to follow, she re-entered the room, and as he seated himself perplexedly, perched again on the arm of his chair.

"Don't look dumbfounded and appalled," she pleaded, laughing, "and above all else, don't wax compassionate. I'd always planned to quit about this time. Thirty's a good age to make one's getaway. I couldn't go on much longer acquiring husbands, it's against my principles pertinaciously to adhere after

a year or two, and as for living on the spoils of my activities, could anything be duller than eventless middle age? I'm altogether ready, and willing, and content. Only . . . tuberculosis! Fate's always been nice and tractable and I rather fancied something unusual for a *dénouement*, an acute stomachache of some sort, for instance. . . . To sublimate the stomachache! There'd be something worthy of my steel. But can you imagine me the star of a 'Traviata' finish? Can you imagine me going in for pathos, and wan woe, and death-bed scenes? Can you imagine the women gloating their sympathy, and the men all uneasiness and white flowers? Do you realize I've powder on my face to hide the hectic flush, that I'm all doped up to keep from coughing, that very, very soon my eyes are due to 'shine with febrile intensity'?" She grimaced at the quotation.

"Chris, will you please smile. It's not the least bit tragic. You don't really imagine I'd stand for any such foolery, do you? No! I've enjoyed the world so immensely that I don't at all mind leaving it. But in my own way! I've always had things my own way, and I'll have them my own way to the finish."

He looked up at her quickly. Hair, eyes, gown, skin, teeth, all shimmered. She seemed lustrous with the joy of existence. And watching her, even as his face paled slightly, he broke out into laughter.

"It's—it's simply impossible to feel sorry for you, Ilsa, while you sit beaming there. What's it to be, chloral or a jewelled poinard?"

"Poinard nothing! Daggers imply remorse, poison despair. It's to be a solid serviceable forty-four—and kindly omit flowers."

"*Coup de théâtre*, eh? Sublimate the revolver shot?"

"*Coup de théâtre*? Never in my life have I striven for effects. *Coup d'état*, rather. I'll purge the revolver shot of sentimentality, disconnect it from the idea of melodrama villainesses' sad ends . . . I'm not a bit unhappy, not a bit re-

pentant, or dissatisfied, or unwilling. In fact I rather fancy just such a stimulating exit, and happy ending to the tale."

She leaned her head against his shoulder, and for a long time neither spoke. The candle flickered as if merrily; her smile was as bright as ever. Finally, slipping from the chair, she went over to the couch, and threw herself full length upon it, her hands clasped at the back of her neck. A translucent quality to her loveliness gave her an effect almost of other-worldliness, drew him to her, impelled him to rise, approach and with a frown of perplexity rather than censure, look steadily into the eyes that laughed up into his. At length she spoke:

"You still look a bit disapproving . . . I'm not such a much, eh, Chris?"

"Not such an any too much, bu—but splendid, old girl."

As she noted the break in his voice her eyes gleamed, and she caught his hand.

"Hot, and with icy finger tips," she whispered, "and you look gentle, tender, and a little awed, Chris, dear."

He bent over, kissed her quietly, and turned away.

Stretching her arms in lazy ecstasy, "Splendid!" she breathed. "The culminating thrill! Tenderness without desire, tenderness volatile, and therefore of lasting value—the one thing I've always wanted from men. . . . And despite the bones! And from my one almost *amant de coeur*! Now I know I'm going in my prime . . . now I know I've reached the apogée!"

"Oh, Chris dear," she went on, shaking her head, "why do you still look a little discontented—as if things weren't quite as they should be? Come here—sit beside me—here, on the edge of the couch, and listen. . . . I'll make you understand. . . ."

Slowly she raised herself a little; leaned on her elbow; propped her chin in her hand.

"You've not been at your best tonight, Chris. You've sneered a little, and sentimentalized a little, and been a

bit childish and—troglodytic as well. But you're a big man, a great man. I've heard your music. I know. And I think I know a little, a very, very little, about the great man's soul. Life's a sorry business to you, isn't it? A jumble and a joke? Just a long series of meaningless oscillations between the gutter and the stars? And you can't conceive, can you, of people absolutely honest with themselves finding it all delightful? I have, and therefore in a measure, unwillingly you condemn me, find me cheap and shallow . . . Oh, but Chris, I confess to cheapness and shallowness—I glory in it . . . Listen well. . . ."

She slipped her arms about his neck, and proceeded, with her cheek against his:

"You know music. You know women. And, above all, you, the musician, must know sentimental women. What's music to them? A stimulant to the emotions, nothing more. They wax weepy over a Chopin nocturne, sentimental over Puccini, amorous over Tchaikowsky, sleepy over Brahms—and then say how they love the art, subscribe to symphony concerts, lionize the virtuosi, meddle with what should inspire awe. I've seen 'em; I know. And that's how they are in every way, inquisitive, meddlesome creatures always trying to mould a man's destiny, to ruin him, to reform him, to overturn no matter what, in no matter what way. I've watched the harpies many a time. . . ."

"Well, I don't pretend to understand music, nor to love it particularly. I hear Beethoven's Fifth—know that it's something stupendous and super-earthly, but don't feel, and don't pretend to feel, that it's so. I know it's something too big for me to understand, and don't meddle. And I've never in any way meddled. The only destiny I chose to mould was my own, and I've moulded it—according to my cheapness and shallowness, if you will, but according to a cheapness and shallowness which I never sought to hide, which never hurt a soul, and never made me ashamed. My stars—they're close to

your gutter, Chris, but at any rate I've grasped them, and they please me!

"And do you know"—sitting bolt upright, she continued in whispered transport—"there's just where my significance, Ilsa Menteith's significance, will lie. Unceasing conflict, discontent, vacillation, striving, attainment without fulfilment—I've seen so much of that, and many a time lately I've lain here all day puzzling it out. They're the things that you, that all big beings contend with. I'm not big, I'm not even as much as a high-bred rounder—I'm just . . . middle-class! But praiseworthy, never - before - quite - attained - middle-class! I've had material, middle-class aims and ends, but I've achieved them, and they've made me happy. . . . And I've never, never meddled with the big things that didn't concern me. I spent my early years among the middle classes, I belong to them, and I'm making my hejira here, in the Bronx, among my middle-class brothers and sisters. There's a little old man in this very house, a fat, slothful old man, a sanctimonious-looking little man with lewd lips—typical of them all, typical of the worst of them, of their crassness, and sluggishness, and meddlesomeness. Well, to-morrow there'll be a big sensation, and I tell you, they all—not only the distinct types who live here, but middle-class plutocrats, middle-class rowdy girls, middle-class what-nots as well—all of them, I tell you, will realize that I was one of them, and the first one absolutely to justify them. My life—Ilsa Menteith's life, will have had a real meaning! They'll pause, and ponder, and understand, if only dimly. . . . And I'll be a symbol, a prophecy, a lesson, a watchword, a rallying cry! You'll see!"

She fell back among the pillows, panting in ardent exhaustion. With a touch of sadness, the man smiled into her enthusiastic eyes:

"Better not do it, Ilsa. You'll be an overnight sensation, that's all—copy for the sob-sisters, another opportunity for the pachyderms to sentimentalize, and flay the transgressor, and——"

"Sentimentalize? Flay the transgressor?" she broke in, "You're quite mad to think it, for why in heaven's name should they, Chris, dear? Prudishness and hypocrisy—there're the great middle-class attributes. Well, I've been a prude. I've insisted upon legitimized alliances. And I've been a hypocrite in this very insistence, for no-one realized more keenly than I that material advantages were what I was after, that I'd have gotten them in the usual way if this one hadn't been successful, and that my game was merely a version of the jaded, old game. . . . But I haven't meddled, and I haven't sentimentalized, and they'll all see. . . ."

"You poor darling," he interrupted gently. "You're nothing but a wildly romantic, misguided darling for all your brave words. Not a one of them will understand."

Her lips drooped for an instant.

"You mean, Chris—my life—just a muddle, just a jumble—like everyone else's?"

"Just a hopeless muddle, dear."

"And they'll have a garbled version of it?"

"They'll be as sure they've penetrated its meaning as you are—as I am. And they'll be as wrong as you and I probably are. Sometimes, Ilsa . . . sometimes I think of a deity all of whose majesty, all of whose augustness and omniscience lies behind the fact that he doesn't pretend ever to understand his own creation."

Very tenderly he pressed her unresisting head to his shoulder, and stroked the silken hair, as he whispered:

"Don't do it, Ilsa. Not because it will be a futile thing, but because you'll be in for a few excessively nasty hours before the—the culmination. Stick to the deathbed finish fate's ordained. You can do it gracefully. You've done everything gracefully. You——"

But springing to her feet, "I'll not have it so!" she broke in, "You're the only one that's hopelessly muddled. I see it all so clearly. And they—if only dimly, if only each in his own, vague way, they'll understand, too, and they

won't forget me! It's going to be exactly as I say. . . . Splendid!"

Just then the other candle sputtered, and went out. In the darkness he could discern only the glint of her teeth as she smiled.

A church bell in the vicinity tolled ten times. In silence she waited for the last stroke, and then stretched out her hand.

"Good-night, Chris. Good luck with the oboes, and bassoons and things. . . . I'm going game?"

"Don't do—"

At her blithe smile he stopped short, and shrugged his shoulders. "One can't remonstrate." And after another pause:

"You're going game, Ilsa. . . . All luck in limbo, dear."

As he opened the door, a light from the hall gave him his final view of her. Vague, indistinct in the dimness, she seemed not so much a being as an impression—of a dauntlessness, a vim, a joy, of a smile—she seemed a wraith abrim with the verve of existence. . . .

At the landing he passed a pretty young woman in a pink kimono. In the lower hall he experienced an unpleasant feeling as of being peered upon through closed doors. And, going out into the street, in his abstraction he almost knocked over a little, fat old man.



THE ARTIST

By Gertrude Macaulay

SHE was startlingly pretty and very young.

She was gowned with taste and distinction.

He gazed adoringly at her over the entrée.

I eavesdropped.

"You see," she said, "where I'm now, they treats you as an artist, not like a piece of cheese."



THE DÉBUTANTE'S ANTIPATHY

By Leo Hays

THE fat man,

The one with the stomach
And the hair on the back of his hands—
I hate him.

He has been looking at me all evening.

I loathe him:

He looks at me the way a woman

Looks at money.



THE ARTIST

A DRAMA WITHOUT WORDS

By H. L. Mencken

CHARACTERS

A GREAT PIANIST

A JANITOR

SIX MUSICAL CRITICS

A MARRIED WOMAN

A VIRGIN

SIXTEEN HUNDRED AND FORTY-THREE

OTHER WOMEN

SIX OTHER MEN

PLACE—A City of the United States.

TIME—A December afternoon.

[During the action of the play not a word is uttered aloud. All of the speeches of the characters are supposed to be unspoken meditations only.]

A LARGE, gloomy hall, with many rows of uncushioned, uncomfortable seats, designed, it would seem, by someone misinformed as to the average width of the normal human pelvis. A number of busts of celebrated composers, once white, but now a dirty gray, stand in niches along the walls. At one end of the hall there is a bare, uncarpeted stage, with nothing on it save a grand piano and a chair. It is raining outside, and, as hundreds of people come crowding in, the air is laden with the mingled scents of umbrellas, raincoats, goloshes, cosmetics, perfumery and wet hair.

At eight minutes past four, THE JANITOR, after smoothing his hair with his hands and putting on a pair of detachable cuffs, emerges from the wings and crosses the stage, his shoes squeaking hideously at each step. Arriving at the piano, he opens it with solemn slowness. The job seems so absurdly trivial, even to so mean an understanding, that he can't refrain from glorifying it with a bit of hocus-pocus. This takes the form of a careful adjustment of a mysterious something within the instrument. He reaches in, pauses a moment as if in doubt, reaches in again, and then permits a faint smile of conscious sapience and efficiency to illuminate his face. All of this accomplished, he tiptoes back to the wings, his shoes again squeaking.

THE JANITOR

Now all of them people think I'm the professor's tuner.

[The thought gives him such delight that, for the moment, his brain is numbed. Then he proceeds.]

I guess them tuners make pretty good money. I wish I could get the hang of the trick. It looks easy.

[By this time he has disappeared in the wings and the stage is again a desert. Two or three women, far

back in the hall, start a half-hearted handclapping. It dies out at once. The noise of rustling programs and shuffling feet succeeds it.]

FOUR HUNDRED OF THE WOMEN

Oh, I do *certainly* hope he plays that lovely "Valse Poupée" as an encore! They say he does it better than Bloomfield-Zeiser.

ONE OF THE CRITICS

I hope the animal doesn't pull any encore numbers that I don't recognize. All of these people will buy the paper to-morrow morning just to find out what they have heard. It's infernally embarrassing to have to ask the manager. The public expects a musical critic to be a sort of walking thematic catalogue. The public is an ass.

THE SIX OTHER MEN

Oh, Lord! What a way to spend an afternoon!

A HUNDRED OF THE WOMEN

I wonder if he's as handsome as Paderewski.

ANOTHER HUNDRED OF THE WOMEN

I wonder if he's as gentlemanly as Josef Hofmann.

STILL ANOTHER HUNDRED WOMEN

I wonder if he's as fascinating as De Pachmann.

YET OTHER HUNDREDS

I wonder if he has dark eyes. You never can tell by those awful photographs in the newspapers.

HALF A DOZEN WOMEN

I wonder if he can really play the piano.

THE CRITIC AFORESAID

What a hell of a wait! These rotten piano-thumping immigrants deserve a

hard call-down. But what's the use? The piano manufacturers bring them over here to wallop their pianos—and the piano manufacturers are not afraid to advertise. If you knock them too hard you have a nasty business-office row on your hands.

ONE OF THE MEN

If they allowed smoking, it wouldn't be so bad.

ANOTHER MAN

I wonder if that woman across the aisle—

[THE GREAT PIANIST bounces upon the stage so suddenly that he is bowing in the center before anyone thinks to applaud. He makes three stiff bows. At the second the applause begins, swelling at once to a roar. He steps up to the piano, bows three times more, and then sits down. He hunches his shoulders, reaches for the pedals with his feet, spreads out his hands and waits for the clapper-clawing to cease. He is an undersized, paunchy East German, with hair the color of wet hay, and an extremely pallid complexion. Talcum powder hides the fact that his nose is shiny and somewhat pink. His eyebrows are carefully penciled and there are artificial shadows under his eyes. His face is absolutely expressionless.]

THE VIRGIN

Oh!

THE MARRIED WOMEN

Oh!

THE OTHER WOMEN

Oh! How dreadfully handsome!

THE VIRGIN

Oh, such eyes! Such depth! How he must have suffered! I'd like to

hear him play the *Prélude* in D-flat major. It would drive you crazy!

THE MARRIED WOMAN

How he could play the "Moonlight"—or the "Appassionata"!

A HUNDRED OTHER WOMEN

I certainly *do* hope he plays some Schumann.

OTHER WOMEN

What beautiful hands! I could kiss them!

[THE GREAT PIANIST, *throwing back his head, strikes the massive opening chords of a Beethoven sonata. There is a sudden hush and each note is heard clearly. The tempo of the first movement, which begins after a grand pause, is allegro con brio, and the first subject is given out in a sparkling cascade of sound. But despite the buoyancy of the music, there is an unmistakable undercurrent of melancholy in the playing. The audience doesn't fail to notice it.*]

THE VIRGIN

Oh, perfect! I could love him! Paderewski played it like a fox trot. What poetry he puts into it! I can see a soldier lover marching off to war.

ONE OF THE CRITICS

The ass is dragging it. Doesn't *con brio* mean—well, what the devil *does* it mean? I forget. I must look it up before I write the notice. Somehow, *brio* suggests cheese. Anyhow, Pachmann plays it a damn sight faster. It's safe to say *that*, at all events.

THE MARRIED WOMAN

Oh, I could listen to that sonata all day! The poetry he puts into it—even into the *allegro*! Just think what the *andante* will be! I like music to be sad.

ANOTHER WOMAN

What a sob he gets into it!

MANY OTHER WOMEN

How exquisite!

THE GREAT PIANIST

[*Gathering himself together for the difficult development section.*]

That American beer will be the death of me! I wonder what they put in it to give it its gassy taste. And the so-called German beer they sell over here—*du heilige Herr Jesu!* Even Bremen would be ashamed of it. In München the police would take a hand.

[*Aiming for the first and second C's above the staff, he accidentally strikes the C sharps instead and has to transpose three measures to get back into the key. The effect is harrowing, and he gives his audience a swift glance of apprehension.*]

TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY WOMEN

What new beauties he gets out of it!

A MAN

He can tickle the ivories, all right, all right!

A CRITIC

Well, at any rate, he doesn't try to imitate Paderewski.

THE GREAT PIANIST

[*Relieved by the non-appearance of the hisses he expected.*]

Well, it's lucky for me that I'm not in Leipzig to-day! But in Leipzig an artist runs no risks: the beer is pure. The authorities see to that. The worst enemy of technic is biliousness, and biliousness is sure to follow bad beer.

[*He gets to the coda at last and takes it at a somewhat livelier pace.*]

THE VIRGIN

How I envy the woman he loves! How it would thrill me to feel his arms about me—to be drawn closer, closer, closer! I would give up the whole world! What are conventions, prejudices, legal forms, morality, after all? Vanities! Love is beyond and above them all—and art is love! I think I must be a pagan.

THE GREAT PIANIST

And the herring! Good God, what herring! These barbarous Americans—

THE VIRGIN

Really, I am quite indecent! I should blush, I suppose. But love is never ashamed— How people misunderstand me!

THE MARRIED WOMAN

I wonder if he's faithful. The chances are against it. I never heard of a man who was.

[An agreeable melancholy overcomes her and she gives herself up to the mood without further thought.]

THE GREAT PIANIST

I wonder what ever became of that girl in Dresden. Every time I think of her, she suggests pleasant thoughts—good beer, a fine band, *gemüthlichkeit*. I must have been in love with her—not much, of course, but just enough to make things pleasant. And not a single letter from her! I suppose she thinks I'm starving to death over here—or tuning pianos. Well, when I get back with the money there'll be a shock for her. A shock—but not a *pfennig*!

THE MARRIED WOMAN

[Her emotional coma ended.]

Still, you can hardly blame him. There must be a good deal of temptation for a great artist. All of these frumps here would—

THE VIRGIN

Ah, how dolorous, how exquisite is love! How small the world would seem if—

THE MARRIED WOMAN

Of course you could hardly call such old scarecrows temptations. But still—

[THE GREAT PIANIST comes to the last measure of the coda—a passage of almost Haydnesque clarity and spirit. As he strikes the broad chord of the tonic there comes a roar of applause. He arises, moves a step or two down the stage, and makes a series of low bows, his hands to his heart.]

THE GREAT PIANIST

[Bowing.]

I wonder why the American women always wear raincoats to piano recitals. Even when the sun is shining brightly, one sees hundreds of them. What a disagreeable smell they give to the hall. *[More applause and more bows.]* An American audience always smells of rubber and lilies-of-the-valley. How different in London! There an audience always smells of soap. In Paris it reminds you of sachet bags—and lingerie.

[The applause ceases and he returns to the piano.]

And now comes that *verfluchte adagio*.

[As he begins to play, a deathlike silence falls upon the hall.]

ONE OF THE CRITICS

What rotten pedaling!

ANOTHER CRITIC

A touch like a xylophone player, but he knows how to use his feet. That suggests a good line for the notice—"he plays better with his feet than with

his hands," or something like that. I'll have to think it over and polish it up.

ONE OF THE OTHER MEN

Now comes some more of that awful classical stuff.

THE VIRGIN

Suppose he can't speak English? But that wouldn't matter. Nothing matters. Love is beyond and above—

SIX HUNDRED WOMEN

Oh, how beautiful!

THE MARRIED WOMAN

Perfect!

THE DEAN OF THE CRITICS

[*Sinking quickly into the slumber which always overtakes him during the adagio.*]

C-c-c-c-c-c-c-c-c-h-h-h-h-h-h-h-h!

THE YOUNGEST CRITIC

There is that old fraud asleep again. And to-morrow he'll print half a column of vapid reminiscence and call it criticism. It's a wonder his paper stands for him. Because he once heard Liszt, he . . .

THE GREAT PIANIST

That plump girl over there on the left is not so bad. As for the rest, I beg to be excused. The American women have no more shape than so many matches. They are too tall and too thin. I like a nice rubbery armful—like that Dresden girl. Or that harpist in Moscow—the girl with the Pilsner hair. Let me see, what was her name? Oh, Fritzzi, to be sure—but her last name? Schmidt? Kraus? Meyer? I'll have to try to think of it, and send her a postcard.

THE MARRIED WOMAN

What delicious flutelike tones!

ONE OF THE WOMEN

If Beethoven could only be here to

hear it! He would cry for very joy! Maybe he *does* hear it. Who knows? I believe he does. I am *sure* he does.

[*The Great Pianist reaches the end of the adagio, and there is another burst of applause, which awakens The Dean of the Critics.*]

THE DEAN OF THE CRITICS

Oh, piffle! Compared to Gottschalk, the man is an amateur. Let him go back to the conservatory for a couple of years.

ONE OF THE MEN

[*Looking at his program.*]

Next comes the *shirt-so*. I hope it has some tune in it.

THE VIRGIN

The *adagio* is love's agony, but the *scherzo* is love triumphant. What beautiful eyes he has! And how pale he is!

THE GREAT PIANIST

[*Resuming his grim toil.*]

Well, there's half of it over. But this *scherzo* is ticklish business. That horrible evening in Prague—will I ever forget it? Those hisses—and the papers next day!

ONE OF THE MEN

Go it, professor! That's the best you've done yet!

ONE OF THE CRITICS

Too fast!

ANOTHER CRITIC

Too slow!

A YOUNG GIRL

My, but ain't the professor just full of talent!

THE GREAT PIANIST

Well, so far no accident.

[He negotiates a difficult passage, and plays it triumphantly, but at some expenditure of cold perspiration.]

What a way for a man to make a living!

THE VIRGIN

What passion he puts into it! His soul is in his finger-tips.

A CRITIC

A human pianola!

THE GREAT PIANIST

This *scherzo* always fetches the women. I can hear them draw long breaths. That plump girl is getting pale. Well, why shouldn't she? I suppose I'm about the best pianist she has ever heard—or ever *will* hear. What people can see in that Hambourg fellow I never could imagine. In Chopin, Schumann, Grieg, you might fairly say he's pretty good. But it takes an artist to play Beethoven. . .

[He rattles on to the end of the scherzo and there is more applause. Then he dashes into the finale.]

THE DEAN OF THE CRITICS

Too loud! Too loud! It sounds like an ash-cart going down an alley. But what can you expect? Piano-playing is a lost art. Paderewski ruined it.

THE GREAT PIANIST

I ought to clear 200,000 marks by this *tournee*. If it weren't for those thieving agents and hotelkeepers, I'd make 300,000. Just think of it—twenty-four marks a day for a room! That's the way these Americans treat a visiting artist! The country is worse than Bulgaria. I was treated better at Bucharest. Well, it won't last forever. As soon as I get enough of their money they'll see me no more. Vienna is the place to settle down. A nice studio at

50 marks a month—and the life of a gentleman. What was the name of that red-cheeked little girl in the café on the Franzjosefstrasse—that girl with the gold tooth and the silk stockings? I'll have to look her up.

THE VIRGIN

What an artist! What a master! What a—

THE MARRIED WOMAN

Has he really suffered, or is it just intuition?

THE GREAT PIANIST

No, marriage is a waste of money. Let the other fellow marry her.

[He approaches the closing measures of the finale.]

—And now for a breathing spell and a swallow of beer. American beer! Bah! But it's better than nothing. The Americans drink water. Cattle! Animals! *Ach, München, wie bist du so schön!*

[As he concludes there is a whirlwind of applause and he is forced to bow again and again. Finally, he is permitted to retire, and the audience prepares to spend the short intermission in whispering, grunting, wriggling, scraping its feet, rustling its programs and gapping at hats. THE SIX MUSICAL CRITICS and SIX OTHER MEN, their lips parched and their eyes staring, gallop for the door. As THE GREAT PIANIST comes from the stage, THE JANITOR meets him with a large seidel of beer. He seizes it eagerly and downs it at a gulp.]

THE JANITOR

My, but them professors can put the stuff away!

[CURTAIN]

THE TELEPHONE CALL

By Laura Kent Mason

"I'LL 'phone you tomorrow," Clint had said, carelessly, as they parted at the dance, their fingers pressed together at parting.

The next day, Neva and her husband breakfasted late. The sun came through the curtains in soft colors across the white tablecloth. The yellow jonquils nodded in their green bowl. Neva only played at eating. What if Clint could not wait to talk to her? The 'phone was in the hall, close by the breakfast-room. What if her husband answered the 'phone and recognized—his 'voice? What if the maid answered the 'phone and summoned her? If she herself, managed to get to the 'phone, what could she say? Could she say that it was a mistake without Fred suspecting and so Clint could understand? Anxious, she waited. Her husband ate on, placidly. Fruit, eggs, buttered muffins disappeared and still he ate. How fat he was getting!

She glanced at a newspaper and tried to hum idly to herself. News! Her own thoughts were more vital than the dry things the newspapers held. War, crime, graft, what did she care? Was that the telephone?

Her husband finally finished his breakfast, rose heavily, put on his overcoat with slow deliberateness and came back to the breakfast-room to kiss her good-bye. How stupidly good he was! Would he never go? He spoke about dinner, there would be guests, one couple, and after dinner a few more people and bridge. She listened wearily. Finally he was gone. The telephone did not ring.

Neva forgot her pose of indifference. She hurried to her room, massaged her

face, arranged her hair in shining, smooth waves, and put on her prettiest negligee. Clint couldn't see her over the 'phone, of course, but, perhaps, if he could get away from his stupid business, he might drive by, and stop for half an hour, instead of 'phoning.

She curled up in the biggest chair on the sun porch and read three stories in a magazine, stories full of stolen kisses. She bit her lip as she read. But, always, her eyes strayed to her little jeweled wrist. It was almost eleven! The morning was almost gone! The telephone did not ring.

She was deep in another story—then, yes, the telephone jangled into her consciousness. She ran to it and said "Hello" in the deep, throaty, half-whisper she used when she thought Clint was calling. It was a woman's voice: "Wait a minute, please." She waited, her heart beating. Did he let the girl at the office call up for him? How deliciously indiscreet—or was he out of town—or—

"Hello," said a fawning male voice, a tradesman's voice, "hello, this is Herbst, the grocer. We are having a special sale of canned goods to-day, so I took the liberty of calling you up about it myself. Do you need anything in the line of canned corn, now, or peas? We are making a special price on the June-grown brand, the corn, per dozen—" She forced herself to listen and gave an order. Maybe, even now, Clint was trying to get her.

She went back to her magazine. Perhaps he was busy. Perhaps he did not want to bother her in the morning, thinking that, after the dance, she had

slept late. She made up little imaginary conversations with him, planning what she would say, when he did ring.

The telephone rang again. The mere ringing seemed personal, secret, sweet. Again she hurried to it. It was Marie Lennon. Was it true about the Jeromes? Marie had heard that they had separated for good and she didn't want it to go any further, but Will Jerome was staying at the club, Bill said, and she wondered what Neva knew about it. Neva didn't know anything about it, but she listened indulgently. What did fat, silly little Mrs. Jerome know about romance? The idea of jeopardizing her idle, comfortable future for a man like Raymond. An ugly affair, she called it, but she listened. Marie rang off, there were others who must hear the news.

The maid called Neva to luncheon. Again she ate listlessly. Perhaps Clint would call her now. She knew the odd, masculine little place where he had lunch. He would have a 'phone brought to his table and chat with her, cozily, away from the office. She sat, day-dreaming, at the luncheon-table, for over an hour, then went to her room, loosened even the soft negligée and threw herself across the bed.

One, two hours passed. She lay there half awake, thinking of past and maybe-to-be conversations with Clint. Had he meant more than he said to her? She remembered how he had held her hand. She remembered the curve of his lean cheek, little tricks of expression.

The maid came in to remind her of an afternoon engagement, a tea. Would she dress now?

How stupid, a tea! She would not go out and risk missing Clint's call. She sent the maid away. How awful to have only one maid, a dull maid without temperament, a stolid maid with bangs, red hands and a heavy, dull face. In stories, now, there was always a French maid, dainty, fragile, with affairs of her own. Oh, well—

Another hour of dreaming and little, idle thoughts. She got up. It was past

four. Did she hear something? The telephone did not ring.

She spent a long while in her bath, admiring her fine, slender limbs. Then she rubbed some new French perfume into her skin. There was no one who could notice it but Fred, and he did not care for perfumes and she could not afford it, but, somehow, the knowledge that she was making the sort of toilet she might make if Clint—

The telephone rang. She let Annie answer it. She would let Clint see that she hadn't spent her day waiting to rush to the phone for his call.

She heard Annie's unmelodious "Hello." Then, "Wait and I'll see if she can speak to you." She had taught Annie the non-committal formula.

"It's someone for you," said Annie, in the doorway.

"Let him wait, a long, long time," thought Neva, as she slipped her feet into her orange-colored mules and threw her dressing gown around her shoulders.

Then, "This is Mrs. Fallows talking"—a pause, a tiny intake of breath.

"You old dear," said a feminine voice, "this is Gracie. Harry said we were coming to dinner and I wondered if anyone else was coming. I shan't waste my new gown on the desert air if it's just a home dinner."

"The Grants and Mr. Hammer and the Grant's visitor are coming in after dinner, that's all. I'm not putting on anything; just that blue rag with the silver. Don't dare dress up, my dear." Neva's voice became cordial. Almost feverishly, she found that she wanted to talk, even to Grace Spaulding. She talked on and on, triumphant in the fact, that, should anyone call, he would find the phone busy, would know that someone else found her desirable as a conversationalist.

"Well," said Gracie, finally, "as long as dinner is at seven, my love, I'll have to dress now. I'll finish telling you all about the Russian tea when I see you."

Neva hung up the receiver and went back to finish her toilet. What was the

matter? Didn't he care? Didn't he keep promises? Was she nothing to him? Hadn't he meant it when he whispered, "I'll phone you to-morrow?"

It was after five. He would be leaving the office, soon, now. Perhaps he would wait until he was in his apartment and ring up at six. He knew that Fred wouldn't be home until six-thirty. After that he could not ring.

Neva idled as she dressed, polishing a pink finger nail until the friction of the buffer burned her fingers. She did her hair high on her head, then tumbled it around her ears and did it over again, low on her neck, running her hands through it as she coiled it. Would Clint like to see it down, curling around her white neck? She was glad her hair fell in shining waves, so that, if some day—

A ring at the door bell. Perhaps Clint—? It was the florist's boy. He did not like rear entrances.

She finished dressing and went into the kitchen and helped Annie with the salad. Then—six-thirty and Fred. She welcomed him with a kiss, cool, impersonal. He seemed so warm and heavy and masculine. She could hardly keep from pushing him from her.

She read, listlessly, while Fred dressed, and wandered again into the kitchen, telling Annie about serving supper at eleven. It was too late, now, for Clint's ring. Would he call during the evening, perhaps? That would be daramente delicious.

The guests came. Dinner dragged on, stupid conversation, old stories, unnecessary laughter.

Perhaps Clint was ill—and alone. How stupidly Fred carved. How silly Gracie was. So she wore the new frock after all. It made her eyes look colorless.

Then the other guests and bridge. How prompt everyone was, how businesslike. Would the telephone never ring? Would nothing happen but this stifling thing that was like an iron cloak?

At eleven they had supper. Neva

drank some of the light wine, quite a lot of it. She felt better than she had felt all day. If only she could find out about Clint—

Twelve. The guests left, with effusive thanks for a pleasant evening. She and Fred stood, arm in arm, telling them good night. Then Neva went back into the dining-room and finished what was left in one of the wine bottles.

Fred undressed and went to bed. Neva undressed slowly, sipping some of the wine she had brought into the bedroom. Fred got into bed. Ten minutes later, his regular breathing showed that he was asleep. Neva, again in the light negligée of the morning, crept out of the room across the hall to the telephone. Almost in a whisper, she asked for Clint's number. She heard the ringing. Was he at home?

The phone rang—rang—rang. He wasn't there, after all. Still she waited. Then, "Hello, hello," a masculine voice, impatiently.

"Clint?"

"Yes, what do you want?" Almost a mutter.

"This, this is Neva. Were you asleep?"

"Hello, girlie, you guessed it."

"You, you said you would ring me up, Clint. I waited all day. Is anything the matter?"

A laugh, sleepy, contented, yet half a sneer.

"Nothing's the matter, just busy, girlie. I tried to get you, though, a couple of times. To-morrow, if it's a nice day, I'll come by and get you and we'll go for a drive some place. Like that?"

"Fine, I'll, I'll"—she wanted to say something definite, something pregnant with meaning.

"All right, then," said the masculine voice again, "see you to-morrow, or I'll phone you; good night."

She heard him replace the receiver.

He didn't care. She knew that. And yet—and yet—to-morrow. She crept back into the bedroom, turned out the

light and crept into bed. Fred was sleeping a little more noisily. After all, he was a pretty good sort, Fred was, honest and trusting and depend-

able. Across the space between the twin beds she put out a white, slender arm and patted him, gently. He turned over and went on sleeping.



THE IDEALIST

By John Merlin

HE was a quiet, gentle-mannered little blue-eyed man.
He wept when his pet canary died.

There were three mice that annoyed him in his apartment.

When, in desperation, he caught them in a trap, he didn't have the heart to kill them.

Instead, he made a cage for them and fed them.

After that, whistling cheerfully, he went into the kitchen and resumed work on the bomb, with which he was destined to blow up five men, a carriage, four horses, a woman, and two children—for the sake of an ideal he believed in.



REVELATION

By Aldis Dunbar

"LOVE you?" you breathed. "Forever and a year!"
"Love me—" I said—"to-day!"
'Forever' is not there—it is not here—
It echoes far away!"

Forever? Now? Yet still the two are one,
Love, in your heart and mine.
For as a glowing planet round the sun
Moves on its way divine,

We—(as we claim its wondrous hours—that-are)
For all the sages say—
Know that Eternity is but the star
Around which sweeps To-day!



EXISTENCE is becoming tiresome. The world is full of women who think, and men who wear overshoes . . . dutiful sons and fond husbands . . . people who sip cocktails. . . .



THE SOUL OF PEKIN

By Achmed Abdullah

"*WITH tears you come to Pekin;
with tears you leave again,*"
it says in the Chapter of the Yellow Emperor in the Book of Lieh-Tzu, the book of the unknown philosopher.

Tears of content! Tears of fulfilment! For up there, in the raw North of China, lie all the qualities of the Earth, massive, self-contained, yet—when seen through the golden, flowered dawn of Han and Ming—as elusive as the Patmos visions of St. John. A macrocosm in herself, Pekin is the symbol and interpreter of China's inner being. In her soul, which is the soul of all the East, are the strength of the trees, the dignity of the rocks, the power of the wind . . . and also the graciousness of the flowers, the softness of the grass in spring time, the peace of open spaces, and the overwhelming calm of vast skies. In her soul is the murmur of Asia . . . Asia of the past, Asia of the future.

Nor is that all. Consider:

A bird flutters like an autumn leaf from one tree to another. It is a sparrow, and, by every rule of nature, it should be melancholy grey and unpardonable bistre-brown. But as it flies in the wash of the afternoon sun its plumage is brushed with ruby and flecked with old-gold; and it comes to rest on a roof which is turquoise-blue . . . a turquoise-blue which is very luminous, and yet without sheen.

There is gold in the mellow, man-fashioned marbles of Sicily, ruby in the million flowers of the Valley of Kashmere, and blue in the high-parched heavens of Rajputana. There is ruby-and-gold and turquoise-blue in

the Great Cañon of Southern Utah, where the White River winds through the quicksands. But there is no ruby-and-gold like that of the little, downy sparrow, no turquoise-blue like that of the low, incurved roof.

A sound drifts from the West. Thin, quavering, monotonous, it stabs the ear. It breaks and splinters into melody. But each tone of the melody is accompanied by appoggiaturas which are an infinitesimal sixteenth below the main harmonic tones to which the human ear is attuned. It is like the sing-song cry the wind whistles through a cracked chimney; like the eerie song of a spring storm over a sweep of grassy hills; like the swishing of the flood through the rocky crannies of a far coast; tuneless, persistent, searching. It holds something enormous, uncomplex . . . and as passively threatening as the bunched bulk of a granite peak overhanging a valley.

It is the language, the voice of China; and, in all the world's Babel, there is no voice like it . . . a voice strayed together, lost and bizarre, like molten fragments from some distant and forgotten world.

The sparrow, the incurved roof, and the sing-song of the broken sixteenth tones!

They are China; China of the raw North, and the great, sandy, alluvial plain in the midst of which the gardens of Pekin bunch out in huge, green-plumed masses . . . when seen from the wing of the sparrow's flight. For it is the garden, and not the house which is the castle of the Pekinese; and so, as we walk through the streets of Chinese town and Tartar town, as we

look toward the Mei-shan—the so-called "Coal Hill"—which crowns the Imperial City, no gardens are visible, but only solid house-fronts, knit together with plaster, bamboo, and scarped stone. The gardens are in the back of the houses where they belong, placed there with a proper regard for the science of Feng-shui, the wind and water superstition, which is the bane of the European contractor in the Middle Kingdom.

"With tears you come to Peking; with tears you leave again."

That was true long before the armies and missions of Butei, sixth of the dynasty of Han, carried Chinese civilization and Taoist ethic-archy past the Kunglung mountains into the far heart of the Pamirs. And it is true to-day . . . provided that you can shut your ears and your soul to the sound waves, thin, sombre, ominous, which drift in from the West toward the Pacific, and study instead the ruby-and-gold of the little sparrow as, mindful of the *"Tsieh-kwang! Tsieh-kwang!"*—the *"Please give room! Please give room!"*—of the blue-bloused rickshaw coolies, it flies up from the gutters of the Street of the Leaning Plum Tree, and sweeps to the carved, gilt struts of some lone-standing temple gate in the deserted ruins of the quarter of K'ung-ti.

The soul of Peking is about you as, coming up from Tientsin by the morning train, you catch a glimpse of solid highways paved with huge, square blocks and stretching toward the cardinal points of the compass . . . and finally a view of a long, dented, zig-zagging line. The Outer Wall of Peking . . . the wall the beginnings of which date back to the twelfth century before Christ, when Peking was still known as Ki, when the Mings were still Tartar barbarians near like Baikal, who ate raw horseflesh, who quaffed curdled milk out of bleached human skulls, and who took no interest in the symmetrical arrangement of monochrome lines on delicately tinted porcelain with which their name is associated in the West.

There is a breach in this outer wall; and the train rambles through it. You turn to the fat, peaceful gentleman across from you, whose long finger nails are encased in gold and whose ivory-white complexion is like ancient, minutely-crackled eggshell china.

"I suppose Tartars made this breach," you ask, since you pride yourself on your knowledge of Chinese history, "when they decided to remove the capital from the Yangtse valley to the North? Or perhaps the nomadic barbarians of the Mongol plains when they came to plunder Peking?"

The fat gentleman smiles . . . and the smile makes him look very much like one of those unhuman Li-lung-mien paintings in the British Museum.

"Yes," he replies, "barbarians made this breach . . . but not those of the Mongol plains . . . but those from across the water . . . who also came to Peking in search of loot." He draws a silk-and-ivory fan from his wide sleeve, and adds inconsequentially: "I believe this railroad of theirs pays fifteen per cent. dividends. The coolies who work for them receive twelve cents a day. They live here."

He points through the window. The train rushes through a hard, profitless flat dotted with huts, with cemeteries sleeping beneath gnarled cypress trees, and with an occasional brook which looks artificial. Once in a while there is a blotch of blue and sad mauve as a coolie woman steps from her hut and stares at the fire-breathing dynamo of Western progress. Then the train comes to another wall, brown, bastioned, monotonous, which looks down on the glistening railway metal with all the unspeakable melancholy, with all the stark contempt of the centuries. This wall surrounds the Northern of the two great quadrangles of which Peking is composed: the Tartar City as the Europeans call it; the *"Cheng-li-ton,"* or "Inside the Town," as the Chinese call it in contrast to the *"Cheng-wai-ton,"* or "Outside the Town," the Chinese City, which forms the Southern quadrangle.

The station is directly at the foot of the wall; and, as we leave the train, China is upon us like a huge Cosmic Being which has crouched for centuries and which has leapt to its feet in a single bound that propels it with a giant's stride. Pekin rises. She shakes her immense, quivering sides, and greets us with a cadenced roar that rolls forth into the air. With head thrown back, chest forward, legs firmly planted, she stands there, superbly outlined, pushing eternities before her.

The roar increases as you step away from the station . . . like an echoing chorus, high-pitched; swelling and decreasing in turns, dying away in thin, quavery tremolos, again bursting forth thick and palpable. There is a mass of color, pink, mauve, blue, and yellow, melting on a background of sepia. There is also a keen, lascivious odor that is not wholly unfamiliar to you if you know San Francisco, the docks of Liverpool, or the stoke-hole of a P. & O. Liner. A sudden, bunched impression of sounds and colors and odors. It passes. And the macrocosm which is the soul of Pekin separates itself into a thousand microcosms, each flashing its own bit of color, eddying its own path, breathing its own life, yet all knit together into compendious unity by that brown, bastioned wall.

You are bewildered by the variety of sounds. Every one talks; and talking in Pekin is always done in extremes, either in a leaden, cavernous whisper, or in an ear-splitting scream. All the people look strangely alike, dressed in blues and occasional yellows; and here and there a Pekinese Moslim, with a green or white turban, and a scanty, tufted beard which contrast curiously with his Mongol cast of features. Every man you meet moves swiftly to some definite object of his own, and the only men who loaf are a few grandfathers with their tiny, red-cheeked, perk-eyed granddaughters perched high on their shoulders.

"Work! Work! Work!" says the soul of Pekin, and they obey. They

move swiftly and inexorably. They are of the Mongol Horde.

An aged Pekinese mullah, a native Moslim priest, ambles feebly along. "*Hi low yah! To hoh wang!*" cries a friendly chair-bearer, trying to make a path for him, since age in Pekin means dignity and respect. And the Chinese smile and give way. What difference if they be Buddhists or Taoists or Confucianists? The soul of Pekin, being an ancient soul which knows all creeds and despises all rites, is a tolerant soul . . . and a holy man is a holy man.

They give way before the priest . . . all but one . . . a woman, a pretty, little fifteen-year-old Manchu woman from the Inner Bazaars, gorgeous in sky-blue grenadine embroidered with golden dragons, and very evidently proud of the ancient profession . . . more ancient than Pekin . . . to which she belongs. For there is no shame in China . . . and work is work, to be done and to be paid for.

"Ho!" she shouts shrilly, flipping her fan underneath the aged mullah's nose. "Some people think that the strings of their underdrawers are equivalent to a mandarin's glass button and peacock feather!"

The mullah turns to the nearest man.

"In thy protection, O my Head, O my Eyes!" he implores.

The man whose protection he has begged, a portly merchant, dressed in plum-colored silk, remarks pointedly to the girl that respectful silence in presence of her elders is the leading virtue advocated by Confucius.

"Virtue!" shrills the girl. "Virtue . . . thou fatted ass . . . dost thou speak of virtue, son of nothing, who only last night . . ."

The merchant stops her shameless confidences with a fat, strong hand. An itinerant butcher . . . doubtless in debt to the merchant . . . joins in, and administers a sound spanking to the nether part of the little Manchu woman's anatomy.

The crowd howls with glee. "*Hi low yah! To hoh wang!*" shouts again the

friendly chair-bearer; and the mullah, mollified, his dignity restored, walks on his way.

Follow him. He leads you through a long succession of second-rate streets where everything, even the puddles and the many heavy stinks are decomposed with age. He leads you past the Temple of the Five Hundred Genii, black and ochre and emerald-green; past tall garden walls, tufted with grass, which seem to start nowhere and to end nowhere, around the base of an azalea-covered hill, and into the K'ung-ti, the "Deserted Quarter." Clustered on all sides by populous streets, it is a hopeless mass of ruins, with broken plinths and split bamboo screens littering the ground, and covered with thick, slushy mud that strikes chilly through the heaviest boot. At the farther end is a tall wooden monumental gate. The gold and ruby is gone from the incurved roof. Time, wind, water, and jagged stones thrown by youthful hands have obliterated the carved figures which once ornamented the lateral struts. But still it stands there, mocking, sneering, jeering at the ruins which crowd about its broad-planted feet in dusty, purposeless impotence. And the sneer is doubly Chinese, the joke is doubly cruel when you read the street sign nailed to the gate, the inscription of which is still legible. For it says, in conventionalized hieroglyphics: "The Street of Eternal Peace."

The mullah walks up a steep flight of stairs, reminiscent of odorous, slimy Santa Lucia in the blue town of Naples. Beyond, to the south, straight up to the very shadow of the wall of the Chen-wai-ton, we see great fields of melons, with their dry stalks rustling in the wind, acres planted with beans, wheat and vegetables . . . a huge monotony of tilled plenty, with here and there a narrow-cleft valley where gnarled trees grow as thick as grass. The mullah stops in front of a squat building which blends curiously Chinese and Persian architecture. The outside walls are covered with Arabic characters.

For always does the language of Arabia follow the faith of Arabia. The mullah preaches in Arabic, the muezzin calls to prayer in Arabic, and the faithful chant the litanies in Arabic. But they do not understand a word of what they are saying. They have learned their prayers by heart, parrot-like. Their religion is that of hot, burning Mecca but their soul is the eternal soul of Pekin; thus is their mind, their intelligence, their superstitions. And so the mosque is not called as would be a mosque farther west: "The Mosque of Osman Wahhabi, the Clarified-Butter-Seller," or "The Mosque of Hossain the Martyr." But it is called "The Mosque of Tung-si Pai-lon," and to the left of the entrance gate swings a huge, purple-and-gold paper lantern on which is inscribed in Chinese, and not in Arabic, "*Li-Pai*," "Place of Worship."

We pass on, skirting the mysterious mazes of the Imperial City, the Forbidden City. Many fair palaces are inside its vast azure and gold spaces; also artificial lakes and brooks, brodered with bamboo and iris of many colors, and as daintily unreal as a water-color by H'sia Kuei; also streets and bazaars and theaters; also Shubun landscape screens, Han porcelains with the priceless eggplant-purple glaze, and ancient bronze Buddhas with the faintest suggestion of Greco-Bactrian grace in the shell-shaped folds of their draperies and the projecting angles of their noses; also teak frames covered with slabs of soft, thick gold, silver mirrors and jade tablets incrustated with pearls and garnets and rubies, and tall vases filled with emeralds and yellow diamonds from far Poonah . . . an orgy of jewels and precious metal, heaped like toys of which children do not know the value; also obese Tartar eunuchs, and the unspeakable palace intrigues that go with their breed, and women and boys who know more of the Arts of Passion than even appears in the Lilah-Shastra, most infamous of Indian books.

Seen from the outside, the Imperial

City looks like an immense walled garden from the middle of which rises an oddly shaped hill, wooded with chestnut and beech. It is the Mei-shan, and on its very summit stands a little building, a temple it seems from below . . . though visitors are not allowed to go up and find out for themselves and carve their names into the age-darkened teak wood . . . which was built not so many centuries ago by K'ien-lung, the Manchu Emperor, who, in contrast to his predecessor, K'ang-hi, friend to the Jesuits, was the true Chinese Bourbon and who, keen scholar though he was, forced the soul of Peking to shrink into her shell and finally confirmed the tyranny of the Pekinese type as against the needs of outside readjustment.

Of K'ien-lung's time, too, is the Mosque of K'ien-lung, which is not far from the flaunting garden of Fa-yüan-sse in the Chinese City. It looks like a purple and crimson tropical moth whose wings are barred with tints as hard and clear as Jeypore enamel, and which seems out of place here, in the raw North, in the Heart of Peking. Some Persian craftsman built it. And doubtless he was very, very homesick, and the great, stony soul of Peking broke his heart, as he dreamt here, in the eternal Mongol North, of Hafiz and Said, of the soft gardens of Teheran, and of Isfahan's damask roses. He, too, must have had the impression that the ancient stones of Peking, the ancient shadows in the Temple of Heaven, the ancient ground of the city, are screening enormous activities more ancient than themselves. He, too, must have felt that the soul of Peking, relentless even in its sleep, is pulsing everywhere, immense in passive power, moving inexorably and cruelly, very complex and yet very simple, surging close, and trying to draw in and devour everything that resists. He, too, must have felt the monstrous *Urkraft* behind it all.

The Mongol Horde . . . the hateful suction of the inevitable . . . and the inhumanity of it, the inhumanity

of the yellow, bland, round-faced men and women who are the molecules of the soul of Peking!

They teem through the streets, which are made by the crossing of straight lines, at all sorts of angles, but with hardly ever a curve. They move in an endless procession, each sure of his aim and object. Some ride in two-wheeled carriages, surmounted by vaulted, sky-blue silk covers. Others, rich merchants they, ride in low victorias crowned with brodered canopies, the wood parts tinselled and lacquered with enamel which burns like a many-colored jewel. Others still ride in rickshaws surrounded by mounted, liveried servants. These are nobles and officials, coming to and from the Imperial City. Slow-moving camels are ambling along on padded feet. They are the shaggy, Northern kind, and they are loaded with the produce of Mongolia. Come blue-bloused peasants, on foot, on mules, on donkeys; and finally the cortege of a hearse. It is preceded by fantastically dressed servants who carry standards, insignia of rank, dummies representing scenes from the life of the deceased, artificial flowers; other servants who rub bronze gongs with scarlet devil-sticks; then, robed in white and assisted by liveried attendants, the chief mourner, directly in front of the red-covered catafalque. They all walk slowly, ceremoniously, but without the slightest indication of piety. Why should they? Peking is old. Many have died, many more will die to feed her insatiable soul. And the women in the mourners' coaches at the tail-end of the procession seem to know it. For they chatter and laugh; they lean from the carriages, buying food from itinerant venders, and exchanging once in a while a highly spiced compliment with somebody in the crowd.

Other sounds join in: the "*Tsieh-kwang!* *Tsieh-kwang!*" of the chair-bearers; the melancholy calls of the peddlers; the tin trumpets of knife-sharpeners; the castagnets of sweet-meat sellers; and the whining of innu-

merable beggars, ragged, maimed, leprous.

The very colors shout and scream. For colors are everywhere, advertising everything, since Pekin is the City of Advertising. Even the gray walls of the little Gothic mission chapel near the Gateway of the Tartar Town receives its daily coating of purple-and-scarlet advertising . . . which is always promptly removed by the good padre.

We follow the crowd through the streets of the Cheng-wai-ton. There are a few large, two-storied shops. But the majority of the houses are low and one-storied. Some have façades which are carved in the likenesses of man and beast, or of bamboo screens and lattice-work. Others are painted in loud-screaming colors: green, pink, blue, lilac, ochre, even black; rarely two of the same color side by side, and the whole made yet more fantastic and variegated by tall posts and masts which stick out at all possible and impossible angles. Comes a brick yard with part of its wares built out in the street in the shape of a dainty pagoda; tiny pawnshops, recognizable by their barred windows; and here and there a Buddhist or Taoist temple. Next we skirt the long, tall wall of a noble garden covered with placards and with primitive drawings made by children: mandarins, ships, fabulous animals, and decidedly uncomplimentary representations of the genus White Man, the despised *Fan-kwai*. Then we pass a fruit market which gives the sensation of an opulent, natural force of the Earth. Heaped up, in pyramids and piles, overflowing from quaint, plaited baskets, and brimming over the sides of low country carts are all the fruits of all the world: pears, melons, grapes, peaches, almonds, plums, and strange, fiery-colored vegetables. They are all monstrous in size, and the profusion is as monstrous. But nothing is wasted. Even decomposed food is saved and bought. For the soul of Pekin is a parsimonious, hard-bargaining, miserly soul . . . and there is the Mon-

gol Horde which must be fed . . .

The stream of the crowd whirls you along. You forget your name, your identity, your nationality. The soul of Pekin is about you, and you are afraid of it, afraid of its stark unhumanity.

And then . . . very suddenly . . . you decide that these people are human after all. For the man with the face of a Tibetan devil mask who is selling you English cigarettes made in Japan is smoking a pipe with a quaintly and beautifully carved pendant hanging from the tiny red bowl; and the express office whence you despatch a few curios to your friends back home has on its façade a delicacy of gilt tracery which is quite unlike the drab, fly-specked, saliva-stained walls of the Wells Fargo office in your native town. Also, as you look in passing through the half-open door of a low house inhabited evidently by yellow-skinned devils who are talking to each other in an eternal drone with that infinitesimal appoggiatura, you see that the door is painted in dull red with wondrous gold arabesques, and that behind it stands a split bamboo screen, inlaid with tortoise-shell filigree and tipped with tiny points of green jade.

And the globe-trotter at your elbow tells you that the men of Pekin have been doing these little things . . . the façade, the screen, the door, and the carved pipe pendant . . . for a few thousand years, and so of course they must be human. For can a devil have patience enough to make these things . . . which demand the finest artistry, the hardest work, and the most persistent energy?

Craftsmen, they, and artists! Master-craftsmen and master-artists! Carved ivories, brodered silks, panels of inlay . . . and, too, the ruby-and-gold of the little sparrow as the last rays of the sun brush over its wings!

True, the soul of Pekin is a great soul. You want to bow deep in its presence, and to speak low, as if in some dim cathedral . . . and then, suddenly, from the summit of the Meishan, a voice drifts down, thin, qua-

very, ominous. It quivers and trembles like the light of a candle in the meeting of winds. Other voices chime in, chanting antiphonally, weaving the spell of the soul of Pekin in broken, sixteenth tones.

The voices leap over the crenellated, winglike battlements of the Forbidden City . . . across the alluvial plain . . . toward Tientsin . . . and beyond . . . toward the Pacific . . . on . . . on . . .



ANNIVERSARY

By Morris Gilbert

HE was very bad.

Whenever people are prompted to speak of him nowadays they shudder.

Thinking of him through this mist of innuendo, his manner does seem to have been sinister. We used to call it a "pleasant unconventionality." It was also known as the "Continental attitude."

No one ever knew of his doing an evil thing. That is the one damning bit of evidence. It makes it quite apparent that he must have been extremely evil indeed.

I really think the whole trouble is that he was almost—not quite—a genius.



YOU KNOW HER

By George Briggs

IN a glorious rush of words,

I told her of my love.

From the exquisite moment when I awoke to its realization
Until it had become my whole life.

I spoke of the past—

How dull and spiritless it seemed

Compared with the wild joy of the present,

And painted an alluring picture of the future,

In which we would wander hand in hand.

And, (as she suffered from a bad cold)

She blew her nose, and murmured,

"Yeh?"



CLEVERNESS is merely a talent for being ridiculous less often than the average.

I CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY THEY SAY I AM ODD

By June Gibson

I CANNOT understand why they say I am odd.

I give my lustrous pearls to dirty little street gamins because they are too poor to purchase marbles, and they like to play.

I have secret panels in my drawing rooms because many times I desire to escape from guests who bore me.

I walk nude through my garden at night because the moonlight refreshes me.

I have famous artists paint the likeness of jewels upon my arms because the weight of bracelets annoys me.

I have a sinister Moor attend me because, when men become intoxicated with my beauty and act foolishly, he is the only servant I have found who can use a knife without smearing blood on the rugs.

I cannot understand why they say I am odd.



MID-SUMMER

By Kirah Markham

DROWSY heat and drowsy eyes,
In the grass is paradise.

Drifting clouds above the hills,
Drifting shapes along the fields,
Cool blue shadows 'neath the trees—
Music in a thousand trills,
Where the hot green meadow yields
To the brook that leaps and flees
Down to wider streams and seas.

Drowsy heat and drowsy eyes,
In the grass is paradise.



A FOX is a cunning creature, but what a fox is to a moth heading for the lamp,
that a woman in love is to a fox.

VARIATIONS FOR THE BLACK KEYS

By Winthrop Parkhurst

§ 1

On Patriotism in Art

There are, approximately, one million ways of demonstrating in public the wealth and ardor of your affection for your native land. The first way is, whenever the band strikes up "The Star Spangled Banner," to stand immediately on your feet and let the tears start unaffectedly to your eyes, while you wave a flag in the air and murmur mysteriously, "Ah!" The second way is, whenever the band strikes up "The Star Spangled Banner," stand immediately on your feet and let the tears start unaffectedly to your eyes, while you wave a flag in the air and murmur mysteriously, "Ah!" The third way is . . . The 999,999th way is, whenever the band strikes up "The Star Spangled Banner," to stand immediately upon your feet, raise your rifle quickly to your shoulder, and, taking careful and deliberate aim, shoot the orchestra leader dead on the spot.

§ 2

On the Value of Municipal Concerts

From time to time there comes up the olden discussion of whether municipal concerts are really and truly of any great or lasting benefit to the community which they are designed to serve. Indubitably, they are. Without municipal concerts to drive people out of the parks in nice weather it is to be seriously doubted whether half our symphony halls would be filled of a pleasant Sunday afternoon.

§ 3

Of Poets as Musicians

The poets' notorious ignorance of musical matters is, we admit, a matter for very real sorrow. Coleridge's bout with the "loud bassoon" is a pathetic example of what sort of errors a gifted man will run into once he gets out of his own chosen rut. But the honours, when you come to examine them, are not unfairly divided. How many musicians, even reputable ones, can tell offhand the difference between an iamb and a trochee? Which knows a hexameter when he sees it? And what sort of a mess do you suppose would Paderewski make of a sonnet?

§ 4

On Some of Life's Ideals

The really great and absorbing questions of the day, as all truly able men admit, cannot be satisfactorily settled by recourse to cheap generalities. Whether, for instance, a musician's artistic scruples should or should not be sacrificed on the altar of his bank account is, undeniably, no sort of a question to be airily decided thus out-of-hand. It depends upon the weight of the scruple. Also it depends upon the size of the bank account.

§ 5

On Being Critical

According to popular judgment, a perverse and naughty seeker after truth runs the huge risk of being misunderstood every time he opens his

mouth. On such a fallacy hangs all the law and the prophets. The danger which a great man runs, whether his delvings take him into the domains of eugenics or art, is not that he will be misunderstood occasionally, but that he will be understood perfectly, all the time.

§ 6

How to Know When to Applaud

Well-bred and carefully-brought-up concert-goers always look askance at those ignorant individuals to be found in every concert-hall who, out of misplaced enthusiasm, invariably insist on applauding in the middle of a composition. This is indeed a pernicious and annoying habit and should, if possible, be stopped at once. It is not only bad manners to applaud before you are certain the music has come to an end: it is very frequently bad sense.

§ 7

A Wall-Motto for the Modern Musician

The price of all success is failure—*e.g.*, the failure of your friends.

§ 8

Another Wall-Motto for the Modern Musician

It is better to have loafed and lost than never to have loafed at all.

§ 9

Gentle Thought Suggested by the Ad. of a Certain Popular Tooth-Paste

Thirty-two reasons why no man should ever think of becoming a musician: thirty-two musicians.

§ 10

Of the Seriousness of Musical Comedy

Musical comedy, all slap-stick criticism to the contrary, is really a very laudable and commendable thing. Consider. It gives employment not only to hundreds of people who could never earn their living otherwise, but it gives employment to hundreds of people who never earn their living at all.

§ 11

The Worst Thing in the World

Though it is admittedly very hard to believe, there is really something worse in this world than a family-circle seat at a performance of "Il Trovatore." It is "Il Trovatore" itself. For whereas a family-circle seat is just simply dreadful while "Il Trovatore" is being performed, "Il Trovatore" is just simply dreadful all the time.

§ 12

Art in Its B. V. D.'s

It is quite authoritatively and definitely stated that Richard Wagner was unable to compose his operas unless he put on a certain velvet coat without which, he maintained, his inspirational juices absolutely refused to flow. And now some modern Russian comes along, we learn, who has to take off all his clothes before getting down to the serious business of creating masterpieces. What sartorial somersaults did Beethoven indulge in before writing his Fifth Symphony? Alas! Not one of us can know. A pretty safe bet, however, would be that he kept his shirt on, and worked.



WHEN a woman lets you see that you bore her, she has decided not to marry you.

SISTERS

By Marjorie Lewis Prentiss

I DID not, even that first day, quite make out the younger sister. But I was so hungry for my own kind, and I had been immured in Bermuda so long with only a few months' tantalizing glimpses of home friends, that when I met the Wintredges and Mrs. Wintredge's sister at the tennis party and found that they, too, were to pass the long summer on the Island, I was pathetically cordial. That hot afternoon I was feeling more than usually regretful of my delicate health and my enforced imprisonment away from all my friends. I was in a barren place, filled with narrow insular snobs, and I was lonely, for I am not one who can satisfy her soul merely with beautiful sea and water. I had gone to the tennis party protestingly; the Darrows had called me up saying that they were short of women players, and that it wasn't really hot, and I must come. So reluctantly I had driven up, and with poor grace struggled through three sets. At home a woman of my age would not have been on the courts at all, but here . . . I shrugged my shoulders to myself. All the younger women had gone up to the States for the summer, and the eager hostesses must fall back on rebellious exiles who couldn't possibly get away.

I drove the three of them back from the Darrows. My driver, "Portugee" John, looked at me in a surprised manner when I bundled Mr. Wintredge, his wife, and sister-in-law into the carriage. His frail little victoria creaked, and he went down the road to the Wintredge's house at a sulky snail's pace. On steamer days I never could get him . . . he was too busy crating his vege-

tables and carting them to the boat. Other times, like that day, for a song, I could charter him the whole afternoon. On that ride back I must have made an equally good impression on Mrs. Wintredge, for, as she stepped out on their porch, with a sidelong glance at her sister, she asked me to remain for dinner. A Bermudian would never have dreamed of giving such an invitation without the ceremonies of calling, cards, and family history. Nor would any Bermudian have accepted such casual hospitality. But Mrs. Wintredge and I were countrywomen in a foreign land, and she herself came from a coast where formalities counted for less.

I sent my tennis racket home by Portugee John, and, as I freshened myself up, I could hear the clatter of china in the dining-room beyond. It struck me as suddenly absurd that I should be dining with people I had never heard of three hours before, and as we sat at table they told me a jumble of facts; that they had rented the musty bungalow through an advertisement in an Eastern paper; that they had been there a week; that they couldn't get rid of the damp smell, and that the Darrows, as neighbors, had asked them to the tennis. They were from California. Mrs. Wintredge was a dear, and did most of the talking. The other sister, Mrs. Stanley, throughout the meal, stared moodily at her plate, yet I noticed that every consideration was paid her both by Mrs. Wintredge and her husband. Little things like the first helping of everything, solicitation about drafts . . . these, of course, were unimportant items, and yet I noticed them.

Mr. Wintredge was a gruff, square-faced business man, reserved enough even to please the Bermudians, and I had a constant feeling that he was listening overcarefully to everything his wife said. Frequently he would correct her, or trip her up conversationally, though never, I must admit, in anything but an affectionate manner. His wife was a tall dark woman, buoyant and demonstrative, a contrast to the sister who, though silent and unresponsive, I liked to watch, for her fluffy blonde hair and dark eyes appealed to me.

As I said, even on that very first day, I did not quite make out the younger sister. She at once repelled and attracted me, and, as I complained of the limitations of Bermuda, I fancied I saw a smouldering response flame up in her dark eyes. She did not speak once during the meal, and yet I saw that every thought of the wife and husband was for Mrs. Stanley's comfort.

When we rose and went into the living-room, she followed apathetically. With American prodigality Mr. Wintredge threw one of the small-sized logs on the fire, and lit his cigar. Inhaling the delicious perfume of the tobacco I mused to myself. Mrs. Wintredge threw her arm around her sister, putting her cheek down against Mrs. Stanley's, who said abruptly that she was going to bed.

"We go to bed early down here," explained Mr. Wintredge.

"The evenings are so long if we don't!" added his wife. She watched her sister leave the room, and although everything was on the one floor, I could feel that she was listening attentively to every move across the hall. "My sister misses her husband," she said. "On account of his business he has to be away so much."

Mr. Wintredge took his cigar out of his mouth, and held it in his strong hairy fingers. Again I was conscious that he was listening over-warily.

"She needs him now more than at any other time, but he will come down

later, of course." Mrs. Wintredge's big brown eyes looked at me seriously, while Mr. Wintredge scanned her in turn, with, I imagined, a warning look. "You wonder why we are here, Mrs. Martin?"

"I never thought about it!" I exclaimed. "I was only so glad to meet some people from home who would be here all summer!"

"Suzanne is highly strung and excitable," continued Mrs. Wintredge, glancing towards her silent husband. "We wanted her to be in a quiet place until the fall. He will, of course, come down here in November."

Mr. Wintredge spoke in his deep steady voice. "Stanley will have to be on the go all summer; in fact, he may have to go to England on business."

"So," interrupted his wife hastily. "We thought he could come back here from England by direct boat when the time comes. We have so many friends that if we stayed in California we couldn't get away from them, and the conversational Eastern resorts didn't appeal to us at all. Suzanne needs to be absolutely quiet the doctor said."

"You've picked the right place!" I exclaimed with fervor. "Bermuda, except for three months, is the quietest place in the whole world! All the people who can, get out, and the rest of us have to grin and bear it."

"We don't talk to Suzanne much about her husband," said Mrs. Wintredge guardedly. "She misses him so, and thinks of him so much that we try to distract her attention as much as possible."

"It's hard to be alone," I sympathized.

"Yes," repeated Mrs. Wintredge, and she turned her head towards the room across the hall. "It is hard to have the husband away so much."

We talked a little while about the people they would be thrown with during the following months, and then Mr. Wintredge, after asking me many questions about renting a sail boat, took me down the hill and home.

II

I DID not delay in becoming acquainted with the Wintredges. Hungrily I grasped the opportunity to be with them, and the four of us had many delightful days together. They were very evidently the right kind, had traveled extensively, and knew apparently many people whose names they were always too well bred to mention. They were gay and affectionate with each other and with Mrs. Stanley, and while I accepted the love as deep and sincere, I many times felt the gaiety to be assumed. There was something about Mr. Wintredge's square big jowled face that made me think of a large St. Bernard dog; he was so quiet, so reserved, so always on his guard. It was not long before I noticed that he never left me alone with his wife and Suzanne Stanley; on picnics, drives, sails, or swimming parties, he was always on the look-out to prevent confidential tête-à-têtes. Not that he was in the least interested in me, for his admiration was always confined to his tall vivacious wife, but he gave me the feeling of always listening and weighing, for fear something unforeseen might happen.

Suzanne Stanley grew more and more interesting to me as I got to know her. Attractive she might have been at some other time, but beyond a certain pleasing resemblance to her animated sister, there was no social responsiveness. I often compared Mrs. Wintredge, tall, dark-colored, hinting at aquilinity, with her sister, Mrs. Stanley, smaller and with a tender bloneness of skin and hair. There was about each woman a certain awkward angularity, which Mrs. Wintredge, being more relaxed and less self-conscious a type, was the more easily able to conceal. Each woman's chief beauty and family likeness lay in her brown eyes, drooping and baffling as dark ones always are to me. Each of the two sisters possessed the same weak appealing chin, and yet I felt sure that neither was of a yielding nature. I loved Mrs. Wintredge the minute I met her, chiefly for her con-

trast to these stiff-jointed Bermudians, and for her cheerful, even-tempered sunniness. But my fondness for Suzanne Stanley came slowly and when it came clung with unyielding tentacles. She was abominably self-centered, but that might have been her condition, and the foolish loving attentions that the Wintredges lavished upon her. Combative, too, to an extreme degree, fighting everything, having no sympathy with anything, and believing that no one had any interest in her.

I was glad to let the Wintredges benefit by my knowledge of the island. I shared with them my own doctor, and helped them to engage one of the few good nurses in Hamilton. There were many little things I could do for them to help their comfort, done for my own selfishness, too, for I lived in the fear that they were elusive, and would some day slip away from me over that maddening ocean. They were the only congenial people I had met since the end of April, and I dreaded to think of the long months before the winter season would begin again.

I loved to watch the two sisters with each other. I have never had a sister of my own, and I have always longed for one. To me it seemed that her husband was a secondary matter to Dora Wintredge, and that all her impulses and thoughts were for her younger sister. She was full of affection, too, petting and kissing the pale face as though her sister were a child. There was a similar response in Suzanne Stanley, more measured and more reserved. I kept wondering to myself if her husband were also secondary in her mind; I doubted it; hers was a complex nature, and she was in a bewildered mood. I often caught her with her eyes fixed on me, and there was at times a desperate look in her firmly pressed mouth, though her lips were soft and curved for gaiety. She spoke little, and seldom committed herself, yet more than once I found her down on the rocks gazing seaward. Thinking of her husband, I supposed. What a pity he could not be with the

poor little thing during these trying months! I wondered what he was like, this Fleming Stanley, for I had gleaned little of him in these few weeks. They never talked of him before Suzanne, and I found by a careless slip of my own that it had a depressing effect on her. I spoke so thoughtlessly that afternoon. We were drinking our tea on the rocks, and Dora had taken up the tiny shirt she was sewing. As always, Suzanne's eyes wandered to the horizon line, and Mr. Wintredge, of course, sat with us, smoking, and taking note of all that passed. I examined Dora's dainty stitches. "Perhaps," I said, "When Mr. Stanley comes over from England he will bring some lovely French baby clothes."

There was no answer. Suzanne Stanley turned to me, her big eyes were swimming with tears, and her little chin quivered. Dora stroked her hand, looking at me reproachfully, and Mr. Wintredge called our attention to the crabs crawling up the rocks. Later in the day Dora whispered in my forgetful ear that they never talked of Mr. Stanley because it made Suzanne homesick.

Mr. Wintredge was not a man who liked leisure; I could see that he chafed under the dullness of Bermuda. His eagerness to meet the incoming steamers and seize the New York papers was pathetic. I saw him every steamer day, buttonholing the cheap discursive tourists to glean, even from them, some news of home. Yet never within the walls of the bungalow did the man divulge his yearning to be back in the game, which I, as an outsider, could so plainly discern. Sternly he set his heavy jaws, and worked in the little garden patch belonging to the bungalow, railed against the drought, followed after the women of his party . . . for I was now included in that . . . and always listened carefully to our idle chatter.

I had a curious feeling about all three of them; that no one of them wanted to be there, and yet that each was remaining because of the other. There

was a great love between them all, I envied it, and wanted to share it. But there was a good deal I could not understand, and I often pondered over it, although I felt that it was lacking in loyalty to my new friends to peer into their private life. Why had they not remained in California, their home, and among friends whom they seemed, for Suzanne's sake, so anxious to shun? Why was not the husband Stanley more sympathetic of his wife? Even if he did have to travel all the time, surely now chances could be made to come home occasionally. I reasoned that the Wintredges were worried about Suzanne's mental condition, and, as I watched her pale drooping face, I was sure that that was the reason for their self-made isolation. At other times I decided the trouble was with Fleming Stanley. Perhaps he drank, or didn't support her, or they weren't happy together. I could piece together so few facts about him that I am ashamed to admit my curiosity was even more stimulated.

III

As I look back on these days I like to remember all these little details, because it helps me to understand better. Best of all I like to hold in my mind a picture of the love these two sisters had for each other, the real self-sacrificing love that I have met so seldom in my life.

One hot July night for the first time I was left quite alone with Suzanne. A belated steamer had just come in that afternoon, and owing to the delay the mail had not been sorted. Mr. Wintredge had been pacing restlessly up and down their living room, and I knew he was longing for his American newspapers. Dora, the light-hearted, seemed to have also caught his restless spirit, and suggested riding down on their wheels to get the mail. Wintredge's square face brightened boyishly, and then the look faded. As I look back on him I think he was an unusually decent fellow. I saw that he

did not want to leave me alone with Suzanne, and yet that he was also longing desperately to get those home journals. I told him that I would read aloud to Suzanne while they were gone, Dora urged the exercise, and with a visible mixture of feelings he assented, saying that they would hurry back. I heard their bicycle bells ring along the road below, and turned around in my chair to take up the book we were reading.

Suzanne Stanley had seated herself by the lamp and was bending over something spread out on the table. Before I spoke I looked at her as the light shone down on her silky head. There was no hurry to start reading, I thought. The little night breeze that came through the window was delicious, and one did not need to talk always with Suzanne, yet I found myself observing her. One slim hand, holding a pencil, was tracing a line on the map before her, the other hand, with its wedding ring for its only ornament, held down the paper. With her eyelids hiding her warm brown eyes, there was less beauty and more strength in her face. Her full lips were again pressed together tightly, and she was deeply absorbed.

I picked up a magazine. It was delightful to me that the Wintredges kept themselves supplied with all the latest American magazines and books, for there is a dearth of good literature in the Bermudas. More magazines would come on this boat, and the next number of this serial would arrive, I hoped.

I started at the sound of something metallic falling on the floor, and rescued from the corner into which the little gold hoop had rolled, Suzanne's wedding ring. She spoke nervously when I handed it back to her; "It's been so warm all day, and in hot weather I can't bear rings or bracelets. I just took my ring off . . . my hands felt so fidgety . . . and my elbow knocked it off the table." She held the ring in her hand, but she did not put it on again.

"It's a good thing not to be senti-

mental about a wedding ring," I said. "A bride ought to take it off right away. The longer it stays on the harder it is to take off." I glanced down at my own ring which has never left my finger since my husband's death. "One gets so superstitious about it. After all a mere round piece of gold doesn't mean anything . . . that isn't what makes you married."

"No," repeated Suzanne dully. "That isn't what makes you married." She pushed her soft blonde hair back from her forehead with a gesture that alarmed me. How did I get on this tabooed subject? Then I remembered it was the wedding ring knocked off the table. I took up the book again. "Well," I said cheerfully. "We were where Clotilde first meets Henry, you remember?"

Suzanne rose to her feet with that same angularity that I had noticed in both the sisters. She stood by the fireplace and fingered the leaves of a bunch of life plant that stood on the mantelpiece. She was very pale and her fingers shook. "Mrs. Martin," she began, "I want to get away from Bermuda. I hate it here."

"I know how you feel," I returned, looking up at her. "This idea of being in the middle of the ocean on a tiny little island used to get on my nerves, too. It's so small and restricted. But I have to stay here till the doctor lets me go; and I made myself get used to it. Once in a while it comes back to me. I understand the way you feel."

She was shredding to pieces one of the fleshy leaves. "I don't have to stay here. I want to get away." Her face flushed up, quivering with hope, and her eyes were expectant. "Mrs. Martin, help me to get away from here."

She astonished me. I was dumbfounded, and at a loss for words, gazed up at her sunny hair and eager brown eyes.

"I don't want my sister to know about it," she continued breathlessly. "She . . . they . . . wouldn't let me go. But I can't stand it any longer. I sit on the rocks all day, look-

ing out to sea, and I'd give anything to get away. Can't you find me a boat . . . some old steamer that isn't expected . . . going north or south or . . . anywhere?"

"There aren't any boats coming in here now," I said stupidly. "This is war time."

"You mustn't tell them," she said, with an apprehensive flash of her dark eyes, and her awkward hands starting on a fresh leaf. "They've given up so much to come here. I must get away, Mrs. Martin."

What could I do? Miserably I wished the bicyclists would return. "You couldn't take any sea trip now alone," I argued. "There are so few boats, and they are very poor." I glanced at the slight figure in front of the fireplace. "It would be suicide for you. You mustn't even think of it. What would your husband say?" I was alone, and I dared speak of him, although I ventured it guiltily.

She threw back her head laughing, and it occurred to me that it was the first time I had ever heard the sound from her. It was a faint repetition of her sister's happy gurgle, but with no mirth in it. Awkwardly she put her hands on her hips, and rocked back and forth.

I may have been annoyed by Mr. Wintredge's St. Bernard attitude, but I now longed for his protection. "But you couldn't stand the trip," I insisted. "Of course if you could persuade your sister and her husband to go, too . . ."

She stopped laughing and looked down at me. She was evidently very miserable, and feeling sorry for her disturbed condition, I went up to her and put my arms around her. She was trembling violently, and leaned against me for support. "Don't think about it," I said. "He'll be here soon, and then everything will be all right."

She stiffened in my arms, and her soft hair brushed against my cheek. "I want to get away," she repeated. Just then we heard the Wintredges returning and we went out to meet them.

It was, as I said, the first conversa-

tion I had ever had with her alone, and the last, except one. I pondered over it a good deal. I tried, in a detached fashion, to summarize this family, as I came and went out of their house for the next few weeks, and I could never see any reason why Suzanne should want so bitterly to leave. Except, of course, to be with her husband. Why should she want to face the dangers of a sea trip, why should she want to leave all this love and affection that were being lavished on her so generously? Why should she not care if she went North or South if her husband was in Europe?

IV

Two weeks after this strange interview, one hot morning, I had an impulse to go down into the town. I was too old an inhabitant of the island to usually face the burning sun of noon time, but to-day the contagion of Suzanne's mood seized me, and I felt as though I must restlessly wander in and out of the stupid shops I already knew by heart. I hoped that some old boat might have come in, and that I could linger around the wharf as they unloaded the cargo, redolent of tit bits from other lands.

Peddalling slowly along on my wheel, I glanced down the harbor. A strange hulk was beside the wharf, and unfamiliar smoke stacks; my wish had come true, and some big treasure box of new interests had come to break the monotony of our shut in life. I hastened down to the docks, and leaving my wheel across the street, walked over under the sheds. A loquacious darkey told me that it was a tramp steamer on its way South, depositing a load of oranges here in the Bermudas, oranges which strangely enough had come down from New York. I watched the crates come ashore from the dirty lower decks. Then my eye passed to the boat itself, the paint worn off, rusty and battered, and with a small passenger deck on top. How small and unseaworthy the boat looked, and how it would pitch and toss off our reefs!

Some woman walked down the tiny upper deck and disappeared into a stateroom. An angularity about the elbows made her strangely familiar to me, although I had not been able to see her face. Startled, I hastened towards the gangplank. Then I paused, asking a deckhand when they sailed. He replied, in the afternoon, if they got all the cargo off. Slowly I crossed the street to where I had left my bicycle, and entering a store, went to the telephone. The cool darkness of the store was very grateful, as I called up Dora Wintredge. Suzanne, she told me, had walked up to the washerwoman's, it was too hot a day, but she seemed determined to go. "Then," I suggested, "Why not come down here, you and your husband, and we will row over to White's Island?" I met her lukewarm reply with insistence, in fact I did not give her time to refuse, but rang off quickly, saying I would wait for her on the dock.

My position on the wharf would ordinarily have reduced me to mirth, so like was I to a cat watching a mouse hole. I fastened my eyes on the miserable upper deck, and I am sure not even a bird could have fluttered by without my perceiving it. My eyeballs felt strained and dilated when I heard the Wintredges behind me. Dora's irritation at being dislodged on such a hot day disappeared when I told her that Suzanne was on the boat. Her brown eyes widened, and her weak little chin quivered in horrified surprise. Mr. Wintredge said nothing, but bit his lips and moved towards the gangplank.

"Two weeks ago she talked of it to me," I faltered. "I . . . should have told you."

"The night we went for the mail?" demanded Mr. Wintredge coming nearer. "I knew it."

"She seemed to want to get away. I really didn't think much of it, because I've felt that way so often myself."

"Everyone seems to want to get away from here!" cried Dora bitterly. "It's in the air. But she can't go. It's the only place for her. I'll get her."

I pointed. "It's the second stateroom from the end," I said, and we saw Dora's tall figure with its awkward movements mount the gangplank. She knocked on the stateroom door, knocked again, then entered, and the door closed on the two sisters. I turned to Mr. Wintredge, whose powerfully lined face assumed again the St. Bernard expression, as he stood there in his white flannels. I wanted him to know that I was not trying to pry into their affairs, and that they need not explain. "Being out here in the middle of the ocean gets into the brain," I said casually. "I have often felt the same way."

Mr. Wintredge's cool business man's eyes looked clean through me. "You've been very kind to us, Mrs. Martin," he said slowly, but as he spoke the stateroom door up on the boat opened, and the two women came out. They walked down the gangplank towards us. Dora's arm was around her sister's waist, her eyes were wet, and her face very pale. There was a strained worn look on Suzanne's face, and her dark eyes were desperately tragic. Hailing a passing victoria, Dora tenderly helped her sister in, and mutely Suzanne's pitiful eyes looked down at me. Dora took off her sister's coat, and patted her white waist as they sat there in the carriage. Then she whispered something, and although I tried not to, I heard.

". . . Why, you know, in spite of everything . . . I envy you . . ."

"Mrs. Martin and I will come along on the wheels," interrupted Mr. Wintredge briskly.

"No," I said hastily, "I've got to match some silk. I'll see you this afternoon." With my eyes I followed the cavalcade as they moved down Front Street and out of sight. Mrs. Wintredge, petting Suzanne who leaned rigidly against her shoulder, sat in the slowly disappearing victoria, while Mr. Wintredge, on his wheel, held to the edge of the carriage and pedalled guardedly. I remembered that they had not taken me into their confidence, and that I had no right to try to find out.

V

The incident was never mentioned again, and we resumed our every day life of swimming, picnics and tea. In the ensuing two weeks I never again had the chance to speak alone with Suzanne Stanley. Dora Wintredge, in my excited imagination, grew wan and nervous as the days went on, while Suzanne became recklessly hilarious, craving excitement where before she had avoided it.

We had all been developing into ardent fishermen. What else was there to do those long mornings when one could not exercise on account of the heat? One couldn't read all day, and there was always that blinking glittering sea which aroused so much restlessness; so, concealed under huge umbrellas, we became followers of the line, first in the little bays, then along the shore. Mr. Wintredge urged a trip out beyond the reefs, and we welcomed the suggestion as a break in the monotony of the days. I had taken it often before, but the visitors must always try it, and Dora seemed particularly delighted.

It was a gay careless morning; we were good sailors, the color off the reefs was, even for Bermuda, exceptionally beautiful, and the seaweeds were endless in their undulations. The fish bit well, Mr. Wintredge was happy because he was busy baiting hooks and hauling in feminine lines, Dora raved over the colors of the water, and Suzanne talked, for her, a good deal.

Hunger from early rising drove us inland, and our little motor chugged its way busily towards the shore.

"I am going to steer," announced Mr. Wintredge, tired of sitting a few minutes unoccupied at the end of the boat.

I glanced at the leathery brown face of our captain, and he returned the look understandingly. To run into our harbor appeared to Mr. Wintredge very simple, but he did not know those tricky waters which looked so jewel-like and harmless in the noon day sun.

With relief I noticed that the captain, while surrendering to Mr. Wintredge, stood close by him, so close indeed that in a second his tough old hands could snatch the wheel from him.

I viewed, as we neared it, the low rocky shore with its twisted diminutive trees, an occasional white roof in the distance, the splashing foam of the waves against the emerald green water, and it all reminded me of the little Japanese gardens one buys in the shops at home. Dora, hanging over the back of the motor boat, exclaimed that she had just seen an angel fish. Suzanne's barometric conversation had ceased, and she sat by her sister, gazing down at her folded hands. The two men stood at the wheel, the captain weather-beaten into a brown unity, never taking his eyes from the innocent looking water, and Mr. Wintredge, like a contented child entrusted with a responsibility, twisting the wheel, and pointing out to us the fishermen who had reached our bay before us.

I don't know to this day why Suzanne did it. I have often wondered if it were on purpose, and whether it were part of a ghastly plan formulated in her poor brain. Or was it just the snapping of the tension of weeks put into articulation? Was it that she just couldn't stand any longer that sparkling sea and water when within herself . . . ? Did she plan to do something that would distract the captain's attention, and make us hit one of those near the surface reefs? I wonder. But that was what happened, and it was all so unexpectedly dramatic that the danger of it never occurred to me. Throughout the whole incident I found myself in the apathy of a spectator. Suzanne's sudden ear-piercing shrieks brought Mr. Wintredge stumbling towards the back of the boat. For a minute the old captain, shaken out of his reef-like crustiness, turned also to look at the frantic woman who, for some unknown reason, was screaming and fighting with the Wintredges. I sat there, watching, and it seemed to me quite natural that a long tearing noise should rend

the bottom of the boat, quite natural that it should slowly fill up with water as we signalled to the shore for help, and all as a matter of course that we should array ourselves in life belts while the water crept higher and higher around us. The fishermen from the shore were hurrying to our rescue, there was not much real danger, but Suzanne's abrupt attack of hysteria, had, I think, unnerved us all.

Gently the floor of the boat sank downwards, while unprotestingly we were engulfed in the sea. The fishermen were coming towards us as fast as their vigorous oars could take them. I could swim, and as I floated there, I remember I was not in the least afraid. I did wonder if there were any sharks as near shore as this.

Mr. Wintredge, striking out powerfully, seized his wife by the shoulders, and told her to swim with him towards the shore, while the captain and I, half swimming, half treading water, dragged Suzanne over to the boat floating on its side, and made her clutch the end of it. "They'll be here in a minute!" I cried to the half fainting woman. The sailor's boat as I looked at it from the level of the water, loomed up as a veritable battleship of safety. The Wintredges had also reached the overturned boat, and attached themselves like barnacles to the other end of it.

I was kicking my feet out quite cheerfully, waiting for the rescue, when I noticed Suzanne, with one hand, picking at the tapes of her life belt. Her hair had fallen down and was streaming out behind her in the water, her face was ghastly white, her eyes closed, her mouth parted, and she had untied the tapes!

"Suzanne!" I cried.

As I spoke she wriggled out of the life belt, and it floated away. Still with one hand on the boat she opened her eyes and looked at me, and I shall never forget her defiant look. Her first effort to speak was unsuccessful, she was too weak, and the water kept filling her mouth. "I'm not . . . married . . ." she managed to gasp. Lack-

ing the support of the life belt she sank a little. "I'm . . . glad . . . of this . . ." she gurgled in a thick water-choked voice. Then she let go of the boat, and I saw her white figure do down under the clear water.

I screamed. I tried to dive after her, but the wretched life belt prevented. I looked for her to come to the surface, pulled with all my strength at the white waist and plucked only some strands of hair. Just then the fishermen reached us, and they caught her from me. I fainted, and when I came to in the dirty, fishy boat, I found long light hairs clutched in my fingers. They rowed us ashore, and took us home in a farm wagon. I lay exhausted in the bottom of it, and if I had only realized when we went to the Wintredges to leave them.

I say if I had only realized . . . I would have liked to have said good bye. I went to bed that sunny noon . . . and my home clocks said it was then about one o'clock. By five I felt myself quite recovered, and dressing, I walked over to the Wintredges to see how they had survived the accident. The door was locked, the blinds fastened down, and the house empty. I could get no account of their disappearance from the neighbors and returned home, troubled and not a little hurt.

VI

Three days passed in which I pondered on the startling facts that Suzanne had revealed when she had attempted to drown herself, and on the disappearance of the dear friends. Bermuda is such a little place, and how could three people so completely hide themselves? Had I in any unconscious way done anything to offend the Wintredges and cause their self-banishment?

Finally my doctor came to see me . . . the doctor whom I had also sent to the Wintredges. His speech over the tea table was long, but this was the gist of it. The Wintredges and their sister had left Bermuda that morning on a steamer bound for Jamaica. They

had come to the doctor three days before, and asked him to conceal them in his house until some departure could be planned, for they felt then that a further stay was impossible, now that their secret had been discovered.

"I suspected the facts from the beginning," he said to me. I was too stunned to answer. "But they didn't tell me until three days ago. Wintredge was not their name, and they came here to protect the sister. The agreement was that when the child was born it should be given over directly to Mrs. Wintredge, and considered her own. They tried to pick out the most out-of-the-way place they could find." He spoke of their attachment to myself. "They said you had done everything for them, and that they could not bear to deceive you."

"Why didn't they tell me themselves?" I exclaimed. "It would have

made me understand so much better."

"They couldn't bring themselves to it," he said. "So they asked me to do it for them."

I realized that I would have to fill in the lines myself and many of the things that had occurred in the last few weeks came back to me. "Do you know who they really were?" I asked. "Not that it really matters much."

He shook his head. "No," he said. "They never told me, but I fancy they were people with big home responsibilities."

And so I went on with my tiresome waiting for the winter season to begin again. I don't know who they were, and I have never tried to find out. But I do sometimes wonder, and I always look in the hotel registers for people from California. Because I am sure, in my own mind, that someone of those three people will one day come back.



THE EMPEROR TO HIS LOVE

By Harry Kemp

I'VE a green garden with a grey wall 'round
Where even the wind's footfall makes no sound;
There let us go and from confusion flee
Accepting Love's brief immortality.

Let other rulers hugely labour still
Beneath the burden of ambition's ill
Like caryatids heaving up the strain
Of mammoth chambers, till they stoop again. . . .
Your face has changed my days to splendid dreams
And babled trumpets, traffics, and triremes;
One soft touch of your passion-parted lips
Is worth five armies and ten seas of ships.



THE distance between love and indifference is three times the distance between hatred and love.



YEARNINGS

By Aura Woodin

I

IS there no husband for me?

When I was young, Mother poured words of wisdom into my ears.
She declared that the specified depth of beauty equalled the profundity, not of
mind, but the epidermis.

Therefore, to preserve my complexion, each night upon retiring,
I must scrub my face with a camel's hair bush and Castile soap,
And spend ten minutes in the application of cold cream,
Shape my eyebrows, soften the cuticle about my nails,
And give my hair a hundred sharp strokes with a stiff brush.
She said that I must learn to dance gracefully, chat lightly,
But never, never must I permit a man to kiss me until he had first asked me to
marry him.

Her words took root, blossomed, bore fruit.
I learned each new dance as it had its vogue;
In society my conversational aura shaded to that of my associates so perfectly,
that we blended as the tints of the rainbow.
And—I allowed but an average number of men to kiss me.
But—I have no husband.

II

Early in the game, Father, becoming discouraged,
Told me that men liked interesting, well-educated women,
So he, and the professor at college, did their worst with my brain.
Hence I am no numskull.
I can talk biology, astrology, literature and psych-analysis;
I have read Nietzsche and Schopenhauer—and understand them.
I can spell Artibasheff correctly, and Pr—the Polish chap that wrote Homo
Sapiens.

And I do not admire "The Genius"—though I respect it.
Yet, the cleverest man I know married little Rosebud Van Patten,
A fair young debutante, robertwchambering thoughts of cards, cabarets and
climbing,
Who thinks that *Sanine* is the element in salad that ruins the complexion.
And still I—each night upon retiring, must scrub my face with a camel's hair
brush and Castile soap,
Spend ten minutes in the application of cold cream,
Shape my eyebrows, soften the cuticle about my nails,
And give my hair a hundred sharp strokes with a stiff brush.

III

I wonder *why* there is no husband for me?

When Aunt Caroline told me that men liked athletic girls, I learned to play golf,
And permitted mediocre players to beat me many games of tennis.
I can row and ride horseback, skate and walk ten miles a day without turning
an ankle.

Even so, all the athletic men of my acquaintance married clucking hens,
Who prefer the discussion of operations, babies and servants,
Rather than the relative averages of Christy Mathewson and Grover Cleveland
Alexander,

The uses and abuses of cleeks, brassies and putters,
And the Masked Marvel's gentlemanly employment of the scissors-hold.
Nevertheless, each night upon retiring,
I scrub my face with a camel's hair brush and Castile soap,
Spend ten minutes in the application of cold cream,
Shape my eyebrows, soften the cuticle about my nails,
And give my hair a hundred sharp strokes with a stiff brush.

IV

Surely there is a husband for me!

Cousin John told me that men liked business women, that they wanted pals,
Fifty-fifty females,
Women who met them on the same plane (wherever that is), spiritual or material,
I became a feminist, argued votes for women,
Sought and found a job, which some poor working girl probably needed badly
to keep the wolf from the door,
And protect her virtue for the future of the race.
Learned to pay for my own taxicabs,
Shared my money with my fellow play-mates, man to man,
Besides jumping other comrade-like hurdles toward the goal of sentiment.
I hear that several of them have taken French-heeled vinous clingers to their
bosoms for life.

Finally I met *him*, but he adores little Kittie Cushing,
Who is a perfect sample of the species more deadly somniferous than the male,
And who awaits with impatience her next divorce, in order to manipulate another
marriage.

Moreover, while she waits, she salamander-vampirizes every man she knows.
And though my soul loathes the irksome ritual,
I continue to scrub my face each solitary night,
Spend ten tired minutes smearing my epidermis with the latest nourishing cream,
sure solvent for wrinkles,
Carefully shape my eyebrows, protect my manicure,
And give my hair a hundred sharp strokes with a stiff brush.

V

Gosh! *Why* is there no husband for me?

Aunt Anne assured me that the way to a man's heart is via his organs of alimenta-
tion, so I took a domestic science course.
Regularly, not a few lords of creation have eaten their way through my dinners,
from consommé to cheese;

Sweetly they commended my culinary skill,
And declared my entrées and desserts beyond the dreams of Savarin or Oscar.
Yet the necessity for pleading previous engagements, in answer to invitations
to see the Russian Dancers or "Fair and Warmer," has not been forced upon
me;

And I am one of those not present when Childs', Churchill's, Rector's or the
Ritz serve tea.

So *why*, though the heavens fall, do I, each night upon retiring,
Scrub my face with a camel's hair brush and Castile soap,
Spend ten minutes in the application of cold cream,
Shape my eyebrows, soften the cuticle about my nails,
And give my hair a hundred sharp strokes with a stiff brush?

L'Envoi

Because, because—hope springs eter—I may meet him to-morrow!



LIKE A TALE OF OLD ROMANCE

By Muna Lee

IN all things my story has been like a tale of old romance First love in April
weather. Kisses snatched in fear of impending disaster. Midsummer madness
and madness of twenty years. Heart-breaking farewells. Gray cities. Wild
love-songs from over sea. Tears. Bitter immutability of time. Quarrels. Recon-
ciliations. Dragons, jousts, and gaping wounds. In all things my story has been
like a tale of old romance . . . except the happy ending.



JOY OF LIVING

By James Shannon

MY wife weighs 250 pounds. She has no more shape than a sack of cement.

My friends wondered openly at my choice when I married her.

But I knew what I was doing.

There is nothing more amusing to watch than a fat woman trying to pick up a
pin off the floor.



IT is easier to be a lover than a husband for the same reason that it is difficult
to eat forty quail in forty days.



OPTIMIST: the sort of man who marries his sister's best friend.

DEGENERATE DAYS

By William Drayham

I FEEL sad this morning because of the things and customs that have fallen on degenerate days and given themselves over to base and trivial uses. I am sick of the vapid, formal, unmeaning handshakes I exchange with those to whom I am introduced . . . I remember how it used to be that men held each other's right hands strongly when they talked together, lest one should draw his sword in sudden wrath and slay the other.

I am disgusted with canes, those dainty survivals of virile weapons that men carried for offense and defense.

Little by little empty symbols are taking the place of reality.

The other night I went to a banquet where men came in with shiny top-hats. I thought how once the latter served as glorious helmets, the real mark of an aristocracy of courage. But now they are put on merely when one wants to go on an afternoon or Sunday walk, to march in some civic parade, to

go to a place where one hears over-much talk about things which do not matter . . . *they*, that are survivals of courageous steel casques worn by knights and earls, princes and kings who rode forth to fight for nothing less than the restoration to Christendom of the very burial place of the God of all creation.

And, now that I come to think of it, not only do the old things fall into desuetude. How rapidly the Present becomes merely a shadow of past glory. How swiftly new things join in the degeneracy of the old.

Yesterday I walked with a shudder under those three golden balls that once shone regally in the Da Medici coat of arms . . .

And there I pawned, for the price of a square meal, the watch that had once so passionately kept me informed concerning the approach of the exquisite hours I spent with the woman I loved!



A LITANY FOR HANGMEN

By Owen Hatteras

FROM clients who delay the exercises by pausing to make long and irrelevant speeches from the scaffold, or to sing depressing hymns; and from medical examiners who forget their stethoscopes, and clamor for waits while messenger boys are sent for them; and from official witnesses who faint at the last minute, and have to be hauled out by deputy sheriffs; and from undertakers who keep looking at their watches, and hinting obscenely that they have other engagements at 10.15; and from spiritual advisers who crowd up at the last minute, and so fall through the trap with the condemned, good Lord, deliver me!

GETTING THE IDIOM

By Carl R. Fallas

INNES used to sit daily in the doorway of his blossom-buried house on the hill, waiting for pupils. With the advance of spring the foliage grew so thick that he, too, was almost hidden.

Sometimes he would pause in his reading to look at the pendant glass wind-signal overhead, tinkling in the soft zephyrs, or at the pretty Japanese girls in their bright kimonos, ascending the hundred steps to the temple on the summit.

Innes, who was of a family that had both position and money, at home, liked to think that he could earn his own livelihood out there. He had heard of the tutorial plums which sometimes fall to educated Englishmen in Japan, and he was half looking for such fruit to fall his way. But for a long time no one came but a few girls from an adjoining geisha house, who hurried off when they learned his fee.

"To frighten away ladies so charming!" he murmured deprecatingly, afterwards.

At last, one morning before eight o'clock, a willow-visaged little Jap in a kimono of dark grey cloth climbed the hill, and after bowing ceremoniously, said in the abrupt style of one who has acquired a supply of ready-made sentences:

"Please will you teach a beautiful girl?"

"Ah, really!" said Innes, his face brightening.

"Yes; are you qualified? May I see your papers?"

Innes straightened up. "Papers!"

"Recommendations," substituted the other.

"I do not need any. I am an Englishman."

"Ah!" the little man observed doubtfully, perking his head on one side as if he were a bird.

Innes did not ask the name of the girl. By a studied indifference to the nature and quality of her he wished to inspire trust in his visitor, whom he presumed to be the inevitable Japanese middleman, perhaps a friend to the family, evasive, even misleading in any information he might be asked for. The girl was to be his pupil; he, her tutor.

The two men agreed.

She came, a tall girl with pink porcelain cheeks, all smiles, in silk fawn kimono and sash, preceded up the hill by the little willow man.

"This is the beautiful girl," said the latter, bowing. "She is O Donna San."

"Good morning, I am Mr. Innes," replied the Englishman, returning their bows. He set a little soft mat within the porchway for his pupil alone, surmising that her companion would go away and return for her at the end of the lesson. But the Japanese calmly entered the house, brought out another mat, and seated himself comfortably next to her, and taking out a long metal pipe he filled it with fine tobacco and began to smoke.

The lesson was somewhat disconnected. Innes was hoping to improve with practice. Both his visitors seemed to know quite a lot of English, but they were wishful to get at the right meaning of words. The girl rarely spoke, but the man frequently interrupted by addressing her in their own tongue and then asking questions about words that

had passed. This annoyed and somewhat puzzled Innes.

Although the stipulated hour had gone the pair only smiled when Innes looked significantly at his watch, and finally he was compelled to say rather pointedly:

"Now I must take lunch."

"Take?" repeated the little man.

"Eat, I mean."

"Ah! Take—eat." And the other repeated the words several times.

After explaining their relationship Innes got up, to signalize definitely the end of the lesson. They followed suit leisurely.

"You will be free this evening?" asked the Japanese.

"Ye-es," Innes answered slowly. Although he had not agreed to evening lessons he had no desire thus early to discourage any scholarly ardor that might be shown. His pupil was adorable.

Very deliberately and precisely her chaperon said: "We shall call upon you this evening at seven o'clock."

They did so, and Innes talked until he was weary. He was bored by the man's annoying curiosity, but charmed by the girl's patience.

"Will you live here always?" the man asked.

"No, I think not."

"Why?"

"I have many friends in England."

"Ah!" The little man looked down the garden path reflectively, blowing clouds of smoke through his long pipe. "Why will you not marry a Japanese girl?" he then asked.

Innes laughed.

When they were gone he mused a long time, watching the thin cloud-flakes chase across the moon. Surely the sallow man was not seeking a husband for the girl! Such things occurred in Japan, he knew. Or was the fellow her father—and seeking a son-in-law to liquidate his debts? Innes only knew that his lovely pupil very deferentially addressed her companion as Okada San. What an idyll she was!

The odd pair continued to come together—at all hours. They even came

on a Sunday. It was sheer intellectual piracy. And for a fee quite insignificant, too! Innes began to liken himself to a dictionary slowly losing its leaves. If only the girl would come alone. Beauty at the feet of learning!

"Look here, Mr. Okada," he said at last, "I didn't agree to teach you both. If you, also, take lessons, I shall have to double the fee."

The Japanese perked his head aside. "Ah! double," he said.

"Yes, two fees."

Okada shifted his head to the other shoulder. "Ah! Then I shall come alone, and will myself afterwards teach the beautiful girl," he said.

"No, no. Hang it!" the tutor exclaimed, disturbed at such a solution.

"Do you mean 'kill it'?" Okada inquired.

"No, no; I mean 'dash it.'"

"Break it?"

The Englishman murmured a stronger synonym.

The upshot was that O Donna San received her next lesson alone, whilst her chaperon sat on a garden seat outside the temple on the top of the hill, overlooking them in their creeper-trellised porch.

She at once aroused her tutor's suspicions by asking a string of questions.

"Did Okada tell you to make all these inquiries?" he asked her.

"Yes; you teach me—I teach Okada San," he replied, smiling.

Despite his impatience Innes laughed loudly. "Do you really want him here with you?"

"Indeed no," she answered, bowing, "he may stay up there."

"But he may not," Innes announced firmly.

He felt hurt. He wished to be able to flatter himself on the charm and also the trustfulness of his pupil. She was not very remunerative, but she was decidedly interesting—and pretty. Okada marred this interest. Okada was a nuisance!

At the next lesson the sallow visage was nowhere to be seen. The sunlight was gentle—as if timid ere summer

time; the air was soft and warm, and tremulous with the noise of insects, and filled with the odor of musk. The tutor concluded the lesson by reading aloud a love poem—and explaining it. His pupil looked up into his rapt face wonderingly. Even her smile had vanished. It may have been that she was charmed by his melodious voice. As he ceased, to flip a fallen caterpillar from his page, his eyes met hers.

"How beautiful you are!" he exclaimed with delightful frankness.

"How handsome you are!" she replied, bowing low, so that from his armchair he could not see her face.

Was her answer prompted by the courtesy of her race? He had heard of this enigmatic politeness. It is difficult for a white man to fathom its depth. He wondered if he had really moved her to feeling.

"I—I—" he stammered, and stopped, wondering if he were going too far.

But she asked with startling suddenness: "Love me?"

"Yes; how did you know?"

"Many men do," she answered artlessly, her smile returning.

"Ah!" Innes murmured. He got up. "Come, let us go up to the temple. I must breathe."

"Is there not more air out here?" she asked sweetly.

"Yes, but I want change. Do come. Show me through it and tell me of its wonders. I have never had a guide so delightful as you."

O Donna San paused, setting her pretty head on one side in the manner of her chaperon and looking up as if meditating a suitable response. "I am exceedingly obliged to you," she said, and they began the ascent to the summit.

Within the temple doorway Innes drew up with a start at sight of a familiar visage. Its owner was squatting on the floor chattering with an old headshaven priest in yellow robes.

"Good morning," Okada greeted the tutor.

"Good Lord!" Innes answered. . . .

The temple interior was quite deso-

late but for a few wall paintings of men and animals and twining serpents. The old priest, watchful for a few cents, got up from the floor, and in a cracked voice began to explain a series of seven sacred panels depicting the decline of a man from plump prosperity to lean poverty through the beguilements of a Japanese Delilah.

The wizened devotee, as he cheerfully told his tale, flourished an ever-present palm leaf—to hide his face from the glances of women.

O Donna San listened with an amused smile on her face.

Okada's sallow face was inscrutable.

Innes impatiently wondered if the spying Okada had observed their coming and prompted the old fellow to make the fable specially applicable. So, outside he asked rather pointedly:

"Did you tell that old gentleman to spin that yarn, Okada San?"

"Spin—"

"To tell that tale?"

"No. He is always telling it," Okada said, bowing obsequiously.

"Excuse my asking," Innes concluded.

"With pleasure," the little man beamed; he was flattering himself upon the correctness of his English.

Thereafter he was not to be seen for many days, and finally Innes ventured to propose to O Donna San in real earnest.

"You are a flower, a vision, a human poem!" he avowed.

His unwonted ardor had again disturbed her smiles, but she looked up at him with touching sweetness.

"I—all those?" she asked softly.

"Yes," he said gently.

Her head on one side again, she paused, still gazing into his eyes. Then: "Is this the correct English custom?" she asked.

"Quite correct," her tutor answered.

"Then it is very sweet," the pupil said, and she altered the poise of her lovely head, deeply thoughtful. She was seeking the reply of a perfect lady.

"Child, I mean all this! It is not a lesson in English," her tutor declared.

Suddenly a still look overspread her countenance. She arose, and turning, fled down the garden path to the hundred steps.

"O Donna San! Child, come back!"

Fearful of affrighting her more, Innes would not pursue her. She did not even turn her head in answer to his calls, and he watched until the brilliant hem of her flying kimono vanished round the copse at the bend of the road.

Okada stood before him.

The sallow visage remained inscrutable while Innes recounted the incident with animation.

"You see—I—I—"

"Love her?" the Japanese asked.

"Yes; how did you know?"

"It is a common occurrence among white men," was the quiet answer.

"Her former tutor did so."

"But my money!" Innes exclaimed stupidly. "My qualifications! My personality! Perhaps I might be a lucky exception. I wonder," he coaxed, "if you could be of any assistance to me. I'll teach you English, the most advanced English, for a year—free!"

The sallow little man looked grave. "That would be a great inducement," he said.

"You will speak to her? You will reassure her—tell her not to be afraid?"

"Not to be afraid, yes," the little man repeated. "But that is all I can say to her. A poor Japanese man always likes to oblige an English—gentleman; but in Japan there are some things about which a husband does not speak to his—wife!"



PERFECT SANG-FROID

By Maurice du Marais

I AM a murderer.

I like to squeeze people's windpipes
Until their stupid eyes pop out of the sockets;
Or to run knives, oh very softly, into little children's breasts,
And watch the bewildered look on their faces.

Sometimes, on nice, foggy, reticent evenings,
I enjoy creeping out of dark alleys to strangle decrepit old women with a stocking,
But this is a fine sport:
They are so nearly dead, anyhow.

Nothing pleases me so, on the whole, as to see a strong man
Lying pale on the floor, bloodying up the carpet,
And making peculiar noises in his throat,
While I stand nonchalantly by, brandishing a big meat-axe.
No wonder I am bored to death, standing all day at this perfumery counter,
Selling violet sachets to cackling women,
And never getting a chance to murder anybody.



NO woman is ever quite satisfied with her husband's table manners or the tint of her own nose.

THE ONE WHO —

By M. T. Harding

SHE sat in a straight backed chair, the folds of her old-fashioned gown arranged stiffly at one side. The harsh cords of her neck vibrated visibly with every word of her falsetto voice with its perfect accent.

Men and women passed before her, each stopping just so long as she granted them the privilege. She could dismiss and no one dare linger. She remembered every name, every face. A special shade of meaning went into the mention of every new name. She made her estimate, accepted or rejected. Those who stood by paying homage knew how much it meant for Madame to smile.

"Why do we do it?" they asked each other. "Why do we come here at all, giving up our most important engagements, perhaps to be snubbed."

They came because to stay away would cost too much.

Was there no one in all the world of whom Madame was afraid? Her dearest enemies would have liked an affirmative answer. Women who had spent fortunes to dispossess her would have been willing to bring such an one from the uttermost parts of the earth.

Some thought they knew of one who could have brought her to make terms. No lovely woman of her own social world, trained in the art of social success; no pretender from any other. Just a plain, middle aged woman of whims and tempers, or prejudices and passions,—woman's imperfections personified—who ruled in a world of her own, the world where the husband of Madame found respite.

They hinted at Madame's heart breaking if she ever knew; of her head

bowed in shame; of her social prestige lost.

And all these whisperers and backbiters, and many true and loyal friends Madame received every Friday from four to six.

There came a day. The husband of Madame appeared on the scene when the throng about her chair was the thickest. He kissed her hand; he made his wittiest compliments to her at which she blushed like a girl; at which the others smiled as one smiles as at a happy child.

No one could have told how it came to pass, but into the scene came the woman of prejudices and passions. The husband of Madame froze with terror.

Those who knew her made way for her. Would Madame take her hand? Would she talk with her? Just how many seconds would elapse before Madame should dismiss her, giving her into the hands of those who dispensed her hospitality?

"You will excuse my not rising," they were amazed at hearing Madame say. She who would not have apologized to a king. "I am a cripple, almost, as you see." When had Madame ever been known to refer to her affliction, even to her most intimate friend?

The woman of passion and prejudice went on, receiving the ever courtly salute of Madame's husband, the stares of every one who had heard Madame's greeting.

Madame's oldest and dearest friends served her with refreshments from Madame's choicest service. Madame's most trusted servant helped her to her hired carriage.

"Tell me, Geoffry," Madame whispered to her husband, "who is the woman who was here just a moment ago?"

Those who stood by thought Madame was whispering some word of

affection, from the light that shone in her eyes.

The husband of Madame cleared his throat. "You mean—?"

"The one who is not a lady," Madame explained.



BALLADE OF LITTLE THINGS

By Alice King

I WISH someone would bring me word
 About the earth I used to know;
 It's not that I have never heard
 How fates of nations come and go:
 Small matter now if bloom or snow
 The changing seasons' fancy brings—
 My foolish heart keeps asking so:—
 How fares the world in little things?

Does Jane still show that toothless smile?
 How do my friends arrange their hair?
 Do William's shoes squeak up in the aisle,
 Distracting souls engaged in prayer?
 And is there anyone to care
 If Nan's apparel gaping springs?
 What shape of sleeve does style declare?
 How fares the world in little things?

Will white kid boots be worn this Fall?
 What shape is next year's limousine?
 Are hats predicted large or small?
 Is hosiery concealed or seen?
 From Heaven's window far I lean,
 Hoping some soul my answer brings;
 And whisper soft, the spheres between:—
 How fares the world in little things?

Sister, once mine, but mine no more,
 Child that mourns and child that sings;
 Whisper to me through my grave's door;
 —How fares the world in little things?



THE PUNCH

By Philip Curtiss

OUR city contains two famous men. One is George Peters and—I might as well confess it—I am the other. There would be no point in denying it, for George wouldn't, and, if you require less partial authority than either of us, I can show you a marked copy of a local paper which contains our joint pictures with the inscription "Bingham's Two Notables."

My own contribution to human progress can be simply described. At every performance of opera in the United States this invariably occurs: Between the second and third acts some ecstatic young miss, with tears in her eyes, turns to the music teacher who took her there and exclaims: "Was there ever an opera written by an American?" At which the music teacher looks very grave and judicial and mentions "Mona". Then, letting his memory run back, he sagely cites DeKoven and lastly, if he is a real antiquarian with a taste for musical curiosities, he vaguely mentions three or four others. I am one of the others.

Yes, once I actually did write an opera and it was actually performed—once. The book was written by a genial old gentleman who now occupies an editorial chair and who, as a youth, knew Longfellow. Solemnly consulting that precedent which requires a great historical tragedy for a theme, we called our opera "Sixty-One" and founded it on the death of the dashing young Colonel Ellsworth, although, for all the human drama which it contained, we might just as well have founded it on the Missouri Compromise. It was speedily forgotten except in Bingham; in time we learned to laugh at it our-

selves; and indeed the only permanent reward which it brought me was the lifelong friendship of Henry Sanger. For Sanger was the enthusiastic young manager who put it on. It was his first independent venture and cost him every cent which he possessed, but in spite of that fact and in spite of all his later successes, to this day Henry Sanger fondly believes that "Sixty-One" was his greatest artistic achievement.

The career of George Peters is far less easy to outline, although I believe that his commonest title is that of "Liepsiger's Right-Hand Man." In Bingham, Peters was a very bad boy. At an early age he went on the stage and became a very bad actor. He was a ne'er-do-well and a nuisance until suddenly he met Moses Liepsiger and between them they became the apostles of piety. For that, curiously, is the platform on which these two gay rascals have amassed a fortune and an international reputation. Of exceedingly liberal lives themselves, the pair have a perfect genius for selecting that form of righteous fervor which happens to be in vogue at the moment and exploiting it in dramas compared to which the Rollo books are pleas for decadence. They got their start with a patriotic play at the time of the Spanish war in which an incredibly wicked Spaniard received justice at the hands of Lieutenant Wainwright, U. S. A., a character with the apparent ruggedness of a valet. They followed it up with a "religious play" which really succeeded in being scandalously *sac*-religious. The "crook plays" were a perfect gold-mine to them with their pious pursued damsels and at the present moment they have on the road no

less than three separate "allegories" which give domestic people carte blanche to see vice under the guise of "a great moral lesson." And as an offset to these—as if the one were their business and the other their pleasure—they always have on hand a couple of musical comedies of frank salaciousness.

I have no illusions about George Peters. He is stupid, he is almost illiterate, and he is unbelievably conceited. But yet I like him. I have to admire him for he has, more than any other man whom I have ever known, the irresistible fascination of success.

Our acquaintance began at the time when the paper published our pictures. It was after his first success when Bingham gave him a banquet and, as Bingham's only dramatic author, I was called on to introduce him. I spent the evening in conversation with him in perfect amazement for I had never believed that so self-satisfied a man had existed since the emperor Nero. He frankly confessed that as soon as he had "shoved over a few more successes" he was going to write the great American play—"a regular classic, highbrow stuff like Shakespeare." I am perilously afraid that he is going to do it.

It was George, indeed, who called our joint fame to my notice.

"I've bought fifty copies," was his remark, "to send them to all my friends."

It was, however, a letter from Sanger which recalled George Peters to my mind this spring and, by one of those coincidences so regular as to seem like Fate, I met Peters the very same evening.

Sanger's letter, like all his letters, had a brevity and a bigness which were both flattering to his confidence in me:

"I am back at my first love (he wrote), producing opera in English, and I want a soprano for next season—Carmen, Mimi, the standard roles. A girl from the Northern Conservatory has been recommended. She is doing a concert in Bingham on the sixteenth,

so won't you hear her and size her up because, if there is nothing doing, I don't want to raise her hopes? They say that she has a fair voice and the Northern pupils are always well-trained. What I want to know about is the personality. I leave it to you. Has she got "the punch"?"

It was that last word which recalled George Peters, for it was his god, his fetich. He used it in his writings, he used it in his talk. His only way of estimating a thing was to say that it had punch or it hadn't. And curiously within ten minutes after I had read Sanger's letter I met George Peters himself.

"I was just thinking about you," I said, and although I did not say why he seemed to believe it quite probable. It would, in fact, have amazed him not a little to learn that people did not think of him during most of their waking hours.

"I'm just up here on a flying trip," he replied, plunging immediately into the only subject which really interested him. "I'm putting seventy thousand dollars into a country place. Guess Bingham will open its eyes when it hears all that money, what? I've got a city property now that stands me in fifty thousand, but with eleven thousand a week coming in, I should worry. Say, what do you think of this?" And without further ado he plunged into detailed accounting of his prosperity, holding my coat sleeve between his thumb and finger the while.

George Peters's figures did not excite me, for, as if to compensate for my opera, Fate had given me a benevolent grandfather; nor did the monstrosity which he was planning for a country house rouse my zeal. But, as he talked, Henry Sanger's letter came back to my mind and I saw that our meeting was providential. Ever since my single venture my lines had been cast far away from the "show business" and I did not consider myself wholly competent to estimate "much." On the other hand, I did not overestimate George Peters's judgment on Carmen.

and Bohème, but at least his verdict would be refreshing.

I interrupted his monologue on rugs and royalties long enough to ask: "By the way, are you busy to-night?"

It was, of course, wholly foreign to George's nature to admit that he was not busy every moment of the twenty-four hours, for more and more was he getting to think of himself as a Napoleon of industry, so he stopped and pondered.

"Why I asked," I suggested, knowing his vulnerable spot, "was that I wanted to get your advice on a certain subject."

The bait caught and George looked interested.

"Henry Sanger," I continued with studied carelessness, "wants me to pass on a singer with a view for grand opera. You would probably know more about it than I."

George took my statement without a smile.

"Why, sure," he debated, "I'd be glad to help you out and I'd do anything in the world for Henry."

The only time when I had ever heard Henry Sanger mention George Peters he had called him "That dirty little mick," so I answered demurely:

"I know he'd appreciate it."

George took out his watch.

"I've got to see three or four parties," he interjected, once more the man of affairs. "But, say, meet me at Pender's for dinner."

"Seven o'clock?" I suggested.

"Right-o," he answered. "Bye-bye," and was off.

II

PENDER'S was Bingham's one "bit of Broadway"—a semi-Bohemian restaurant with a cabaret—and George and I arrived there at exactly the same moment. George straightened his coat-collar as he walked in, then assumed an air of studied nonchalance, which was only human. It was easy to see that he expected that his entrance would cause a sensation.

Human fame, however, even theatrical fame, is a thing evanescent, for nobody apparently paid any attention to Bingham's two notables. George was somewhat crestfallen, but he had already reached that point of grandeur where he could think it amusing.

"Guess we're travelling incog," he remarked, as we sat down. "I used to know everybody in this little dump."

Indeed, beyond the professional effusiveness of the waiters I think that I with my spectacles and my goloshes attracted more attention than George. The head-waiter was almost tender. He seemed to say: "I'm glad to see you, Professor, but are you sure that you know where you are?"

I tried to indicate as much to George.

"They're wondering what such an old fossil as I am doing amid these white lights," I suggested and then, with a touch of maliciousness, I could not help adding: "In other words, *'Que venait-il faire dans cette galère?'*"

George, however, had never been nonplussed in his life.

"Sure," he replied, "Tutti-fruity and e pluribus unum. What'll yuh have?"

As master of ceremonies he took charge of the menu and, as if to repay the management for its unconscious slight, he insisted on asking for dishes which could not possibly have been obtained outside of New York. The waiter became at first apologetic and then almost angry, so to hasten matters, we compromised on a steak, the preparation of which gave us time to look around.

Pender's was, in fact, a place not unworthy of study. Bingham being too small a city to have a Bohemian set, Pender's was wholly Bohemian with the added attraction of not knowing it. The fact that its service and even its cabaret were advertised as "highly refined" increased its very Bohemianism. It was loud, it was smoky, it was cheap, it was honest, and incidentally it was wholly innocuous. The wine was bad and the beer was excellent. The first violinist was better than many whom I have heard in symphony orchestras,

and the second was the most execrable performer I have ever heard in my life. The diners were mostly solid mechanics' families to whom a dinner at Pender's was an event and a planked steak the symbol of elegance. The singers and dancers were persons who just didn't happen to be on the vaudeville circuits.

Judging from our professions one would have supposed that George would have been quite at home and that I would have been rather distressed. As a matter of fact, I enjoyed it hugely, and George was filled with disdain.

"Bum joint, bum joint," was his comment, while we still awaited the steak. "There are just three places in the United States fit to eat in."

He named them and I could not deny it, because I had never seen them.

A baritone singer came on the floor and gave a very earnest rendering of a song in which, with much fervor, he bade "Good-bye, sum-mer, sum-mer, good-bye." His voice was fair, he sang perfectly true and he made the diners thoroughly happy. For sentiment they were as starved as they were for planked steak. They applauded lustily and got for an encore "They Called It Eye-er-land."

George was the only person there who did not enjoy himself.

"Cabaret singer's delight," he remarked cynically. "I never saw a cabaret singer yet who didn't work those two old wheezes."

He lit a cigar and turned his back to show his contempt, but when a tall young man and a slender girl came on and danced very prettily, he had a compensating idea.

"I wonder what they would do," he chuckled, "if they knew that George Peters was in the room."

I felt a desire to make a violent move which would insure that George Peters would not be in the room. I had never before realized what an absolute ass he was—this man whom hundreds of thousands of people actually revered, whom a Harvard professor had

once proclaimed as "the single new note in American drama." I made no answer, but George needed none. He never did. He talked to himself and his thoughts pleased him.

The cabaret must, without knowing it, have sensed George's displeasure, for the orchestra was left to its own unaided efforts, but the first violinist was unable, even by heroic work, to save the second, so we let conversation bury his yeoman attempts.

It was, indeed, well towards the close of the dinner, when George had interrupted his autobiography long enough to order dollar cigars, that I caught a phrase from that one honest violin and then I straightened up in my chair for I had heard a note—just one note but it was like a face that, once in a life-time, you see from a car window and never forget. Just one note, but not since those eager youthful days when I had thought that I was writing a classic had I felt the romance, the story, the picturesqueness, the love, the hate, of all music come out of one note.

I turned, half expecting to see a prima donna and I saw just another of those plain, rather flashy girls who had sung all the evening. There was no mystery here, no tragedy, no lamb in a wolf den; she simply belonged there. She was fairly young and fairly pretty, but her face was covered with rouge. She did not flinch at singing before that room-full of smoking men and heavy-faced women. Nor, on the other hand, did she revel in it. She smiled amiably enough, in the cabaret fashion, and went on with her work. George turned when I did and then turned back in mock despair.

"Oh, help," he exclaimed. "She's singing 'A Perfect Day'."

But that one note had held my ear and I disregarded him. I was actually thrilled, but as the singer went on I was doomed to disappointment. She had indeed a beautiful voice and an unbelievable range, but her method of singing was little less than barbaric. All the effects of the cheap performer she

called on. She hit a full tone below notes and then sobbed up to them. Whenever she had an opportunity to use one of the conventional mispronunciations of cheap art she used it and her pianissimos were pure falsetto. She breathed between syllables and went up the octaves with her shoulders.

And yet she was a marvel. I had the constant feeling that she must be forcing, then found that she wasn't. She covered at the very least two octaves and a quarter and with each higher note you expected that tell-tale rasp that would mean vocal cords being torn to pieces—and it never came. With head tilted slightly forward, smiling easily, her face undistorted, she took high C with the same easy power that she had taken that first low note. For those two notes were the story—the very top and the very bottom. The awfulness lay in between.

It was not surprising that the close of the song was followed by a thunder of applause, for the heaviest burgher there could have told that the girl had an unusual voice, but during the encore it was the people and not the girl whom I watched.

For as she began her repetition I caught her eye and for just a second it seemed to be speaking. For an instant I actually thought that my realization of those two notes had established an understanding between us. Then her eye turned away and as I followed its course I saw a man at another table straighten and smile. From him I looked to another and gradually it dawned on me that every man in that room firmly believed that the girl was singing to him and to him alone.

The picture was really ludicrous—every face turned in the singer's direction and every one bearing that same self-conscious smirk which showed that every face was convinced that it alone had attracted the girl's attention. There must have been seventy people there and seventy eyes were trying to catch the girl's. Even the women, under the same illusion, showed it in a more delicate way. Frankly senti-

mental, they all sat in unashamed emotion, some with tearful eyes fixed sadly before them, and some gazing fixedly at the singer, completely carried away.

The end of the encore left me, however, depressed. It had told too much. I had heard a wonderful voice. Of that there could be no doubt, but, years before, I had lost my illusions about such voices. There had been a time when I had been constantly discovering prodigies but the inevitable failure had shown me the hopelessness of such finds. The girl's limitations were written right in her song. Given to a careful instructor, not now but five years before, and brought up inch by inch from the foundations she might have become an unusual, possibly a notable, singer. But the way was too long. Already her technical faults were so deeply sunk as to be almost insurmountable. Her face itself expressed neither the great ambition nor the necessary indomitable persistence. Had she had the true longings she would not have been singing in Pender's, for she could not have escaped the knowledge that she had a real voice.

In a way I now understood George Peters' indifference.

"George," I said, "that girl has a great voice. Why is she singing here?"

His answer was instantaneous. He tapped his head.

"Nobody home," he replied.

For once I rather respected his judgment. Given cynically and from his vast condescension it was, nevertheless, the probable answer.

"Yes, she's got a fair voice," he granted reluctantly. "She's a cute little chicken and she's got a good shape, but in the show business you need more than that.

"You need brains," he added impressively. He rather implied that his own success had depended entirely on his intellect and for the first time in our acquaintance I began to wonder whether it were not so.

"If that girl were going to be on the stage," he continued, "she'd be

there. There's no other answer than that. She's got to show people, and this won't get by. Its old stuff—*no punch.*"

He had reached his inevitable climax, he had given his dictum, and for once I began to see its force. I said no more but my mind would not keep from dwelling on the pathos of it. I knew that George had spoken the truth. I knew that at the girl's singing the most elementary manager would hold up his hands in horror. Equally I knew that there were just three men in America with sufficient imagination and sufficient foresight to listen for those two notes. One was a man so high in the Metropolitan Opera that he could never be reached. One was a man who discovered tenors in the streets of Naples but who would never believe that a singer could come from his own United States. The other was Henry Sanger. And in my pocket was a letter from Sanger.

But Peters had spoken the truth. If the girl had wanted to be a great artist she would long before have been on the road to it. Ten years of effort might have brought her within sight of her goal, but she had apparently never shown even the desire to start.

There was just one other chance. Women of her kind had been brought to greatness by just one thing—a man who believed in them, a man who inspired them, a man who spent on them every grain of his thoughts, a man who redeemed their lack of brains with his, a master who drove them to glory with whips as artillery soldiers lash on their teams.

This I knew, and I also knew that in that girl's life probably just one man had ever heard those two notes. I had no more illusions about the second of Bingham's great men than I had about the first. That line in the paper had been really my epitaph; but when I had written "Sixty-One" I had looked for no epitaph. I had heard inspiration then; the notes that I saw in my mind had called me to romance and fighting and greatness. But with that first crude

work I had stopped. Henry Sanger had not stopped. His first real failure had been his first inspiration. Even the editor had not stopped, for at least he had written reviews. And I who had written the life of the work had settled back on paternal wealth to good eating, soft living, and dilettanteism.

I, too, had had notes when I had been at that girl's age and at the very worst I had given them up for security. For what this girl might give them up I could only imagine. George could have told me.

George, however, was hardly sharing my reverie. He looked at his watch.

"How about it?" he asked.

We would indeed have to hurry to reach the concert in time, so paying our check we went out. We left a singer and went to look for one.

III

OUR concert—no, surely it must have been a "musical"—was held in The Lyceum and, if Pender's had been remiss in attentions to Bingham's notables, The Lyceum more than made up for it. The reason, however, was as ironical as George's fame. The Lyceum bore my grandfather's name and even I sent a routine check every year. The earnest young men with nose-glasses who acted as volunteer ushers hurried to meet us and were all for pushing us to the front of the crowded hall but, having experience with musicales, I chose a seat in the gallery from which escape might be possible, for past experience had told me that escape might equally be advisable.

I had never enthused about The Lyceum. I did not enthuse about it now, but coming from Pender's, I suddenly saw it in a new light, in a vivid contrast. There the walls had been low and gaudy; here they were spotless and high. There the air had been foul and heavy with smoke; here it was clean and pure as a snowy hillside. There the faces had been dull and passionate; here they were calm and refined. But there the feeling had been of working

for life and grasping for pleasure; while here the atmosphere was the white emptiness of lifeless security.

I looked at the faces below me with the memory of those other faces at Pender's and I saw what one always sees at a "musicale"—gaunt women of forty and fifty with set expressions and hard lines, not the hard lines of disillusionment but the hard lines of never having known; young girls of eighteen with old-fashioned faces, pretty in the way that an old-fashioned garden is pretty, but with a pathetic wistfulness as if they had always supposed that there had been life but now were learning to take it for granted that there was not. In all that mass of capes and bonnets there was not one pretty dress and the only breaks in the lines of gray were the "Tuxedoes" of men—little pursy men, some of whom chirruped and some of whom looked as if they had been dragged there by the ear. I had not supposed that there could be so many librarians in the world, for every man there could have been nothing else. You knew absolutely what every man and woman in that room would say of the "musicale"—"Wasn't it splendid?" They always say that.

For the second time that evening I was prepared to appreciate George, for, compared to those set, stony faces before me his was the inspired face of genius, but when I turned he was looking upwards with an expression curiously exalted.

"Say," he whispered, "there's some class to this."

I followed his look at the ceiling. The Lyceum was indeed a beautiful building, beautiful exactly as the people in it were beautiful, simply because it committed no offense. Half Puritan meeting house, half Greek temple, it was a lofty room of pillars and arches, all snowy white. Like the people below me, the architect who drew it could face his brothers and say: "Find one single instance of bad taste." There was no instance of bad taste. It was flawless. And yet I remembered Pender's.

But George's enthusiasm grew and grew. He opened his program:

"Gee," he exclaimed, "this is real stuff."

I opened my program because he did, but I had no need to. I could guess what was in it. If an actor should announce that he would give readings from Shakespeare, Homer, Goethe, Schiller, Dumas the elder, Thackeray, Dickens, Stevenson, Ellen Glasgow, and Mr. Dooley, one would think him a little bit queer, but no musicale ever did its duty by its audience without doing just that. If I remember rightly, this singer and the pianist, by whom she was "assisted," offered Beethoven, Wagner, Chopin, Massenet, Brahms, and Liszt, while for "lighter numbers" there were "negro melodies" and "groups" of those terrible songs which always score so heavily at such concerts—those songs which are neither poetry nor prose, which just hop along without beginning or ending, without meaning or climax. One knows the kind:

*A'Maying I go,
I go a'Maying.
I went a'Maying,
A'Maying I went.*

But George's eye had been caught by the opening number:

"Beethoven—Sonata E Flat, op. 81 a. Les adieux, l'absence, et le retour."

"Gee," he repeated, "that's class!"

"Say, look here," he continued, "can you beat that?" And turning to the last page he pointed to the list of patronesses. Well might he be impressed for he had probably been chased out of the orchards of most of them. I, however, saw something else. I saw those girls in Pender's working for a week for what these performers probably received for the night for, although they received a "fee," the concert was chastely given for the "benefit" of something. No thought must of course be expressed that they did it for an honest living.

A rustle of expectation interrupted

George's meditations and mine, for the pianist had come on for "Op. 81a." She was an oldish woman, but she smiled coyly and bowed while the audience applauded frantically. The grand piano was closed and she attempted feebly to open it. A hush of painful delay fell on the audience, while the pianist struggled. Then a sister nudged a fussy little man in the front row. The latter half rose to his feet, hesitated and sat down again. Then again he arose, ascended to the platform and, with magnificent masculinity, lifted the cover and propped it up. He returned to his seat beaming and the audience breathed a sigh of relief. A crisis had been passed.

The pianist bowed and smiled sweetly then settled down to her work. For work it was. She did not kill Beethoven. She ignored him. Up and down over the keys worked her little fat hands. You could see her "method" of "fingering." Through the first two movements she went with religious accuracy and began on the third, but suddenly she paused, played three or four vague notes and solemnly began again. She had forgotten it! I was sorry for her, for agony was written in her work, but as I looked at the audience I gasped. There were probably not ten people in all that room of "music lovers" who had known what had happened. They had all thought it part of "the piece."

Yes, that was actual fact, for when she had finished out broke a volley of applause while sister looked at sister and brother looked at brother and nodded and smiled.

"Wasn't that magnificent?" they were saying. And in all that storm of applause the leader was George W. Peters!

"Say, can't she tickle those ivories?" he exclaimed.

He continued to lead the roar for the encore and got it. It was, however, the second number that marked the appearance of the singer whom we had come to hear, and we both awaited with anticipation.

At last she came on—a tall, unemo-

tional girl, coldly good-looking, and Greekly built. Calmly she looked at the audience. At least her presence was good and George thought more than that.

"A regular girl," he whispered. But, from the minute she came on the stage, I was conscious of a vague hostility.

Of course she had her own accompanist and a certain amount of piano stool business must be gone through.

Massenet was her choice and she began accurately, chisel-like:

"Il est doux, il est bon."

Composedly, statuesquely, she stood there and the notes rose up easily, perfectly. It was good; it was very good; and I understood The Lyceum. Against the discords and gratings of Pender's it was like mountain air after a smoking car. Culture had certainly justified itself. All the seeming affectations of technical music were explained in that contrast. Of the girl's technique, there could be no question. It would be an injustice not to give my indorsement.

She finished the song. She did it well for she had studied it hard. George thought so too.

"Great stuff," he whispered judicially.

And, most of all, the audience thought so. The accompanist began it again, but somehow the fact irritated me. It was a wonderful song she was singing, but, inwardly, I did not want to hear it again. It was too much like a repetition of a dull story.

I thought it over. I knew that the singing was faultless, but why did I have that inward hostility? For have it I certainly did. Within my soul I was growingly conscious of the hope that the girl would fail. I tried to analyze it in all its details. Did it mean, I wondered, that I was finding exactly what Sanger had sent me to find? Did it mean that she failed on the personality. failed on "the punch?" I followed up eagerly the whimsical query. The girl had affected me hostilely. Would she not affect others that way? I was an average listener—

And with that I saw it, saw my own shame and perfidy. I saw that roomful of faces at Pender's, each eager to catch a girl's eye, and I understood what prejudiced me. With myself as the sole judge and arbiter I was actually jealous of this girl here, jealous for the sake of that other! In nothing short of injustice could I fail to indorse this singer and in nothing short of professional madness could I suggest the other. I tried to laugh at myself but I could not. I remained absolutely hoping that the singer would make a mistake.

But the singer did not make a mistake. Clear through her numbers she sang and sang faultlessly, while for once the crowd was correct in its applause. Of all that roomful it was now I who was the only one who did not enjoy it, and I because I could not find fault with it. As for George he was ecstatic.

"That's big-league stuff," he remarked.

My mind was made up, or rather my conscience. My message to Sanger would be in the affirmative.

Then came the last number. It was Brahms' "Des Schmiedt." The girl sang it spiritedly and its anvil rhythms struck a popular note. It proved her case, but a thing which I had not seen had taken place. The little man who had been the hero of the closed piano had slipped behind with a note and when the singer came out for her encore there was a rustle of expectation. Even the accompanist looked happy. She turned her music and struck her chord. I did not recognize it at once, but George did and turned:

"Well, what do you know about that?"

It was "A Perfect Day."

And for me it was the decision. The champions had at last met on equal terms and before three notes had passed I knew who had won. The song went well—yes, it went well—but no sea of faces tried, individually, to catch the singer's eye. She sang it and stopped, that was all—no cry, no sob, no yearn-

ing. The audience clapped and put on its coats. Even George was perplexed.

"I don't get it. I don't get it at all," he remarked, as we reached the door. "That girl at Pender's put it all over her."

"She did," I replied. "Shall we hear her again?"

George grinned and we turned that way.

But we did not hear the girl at Pender's again, and, as I think it over, I am glad we did not. With that horrible second fiddle I would surely have lost my courage. What happened, indeed, was far better. I must explain.

The door to Pender's opens into a long hall on one side of which is the main dining room while on the other is a private banquet hall. The singers at Pender's, as I have learned since, do double duty. They sing in the dining room and then, if the Elks or the hardware drummers are having a banquet, they repeat just over the way. Such must have been the case on this night, for as we came in the door, there in the vacant hallway stood the girl we had come to seek. The chance was too much for George. Ever since we had left The Lyceum, he had swelled again in his old importance and he walked straight up to the girl.

"Say, little one," he began, "we would have words with thee."

The girl looked around, at first curious, and then her eyes narrowed. To himself George was the emissary of Henry Sanger. To the girl he was a young man in a brown derby. One look was enough.

"Not a chance," she answered, drawing away.

She turned to go into the banquet room, but George was undismayed. He followed closely and made his fatal mistake. Quite as unconsciously as he had held my sleeve that afternoon he put out his hand and grasped her arm, but the girl's eyes flamed. Straight as a goddess she turned, her head thrown back, her breath coming fast. Here was a Carmen, if ever there was one. The whole picture was there. But that

was not all, for, as quick as the flashing tongue of a snake, out shot her hand, full in his smirking face her palm struck George, and she passed on out of the hall. George fell back, amazement, discomfiture, shame in his look, but he was fair.

"Number seven wins the oil-stove," was all he remarked.

IV

BUT later that night when I went to my house I wandered into the library and got down a dusty score. I played

over a few of the songs. They were not so bad, but they did not interest me now. I began looking over my books on vocalization and saw I would need many more. I would tend to that in the morning for time would be fearfully short. I could not even do it all by myself, I knew, but the main part must be mine. For just after I had left George I had wired to Sanger:

"Give me six weeks and I will give you your Carmen—"

It really was very cheap, but after that I could not help adding:

"—and one with the punch."



TRAGEDIES

By William Sanford

NATIONS were at war. Millions of dead were strewn upon the blood-stained battle-field. The cries of the wounded rent the air. . . .

The stock market was in panic. Millions upon millions of dollars were being swept away from rich and poor alike.

Prices for all things necessary to maintain life were being driven higher and higher. The poor struggled against the ravages of starvation, many succumbed—the victims of want.

Millions upon millions of people sat wild-eyed with fear at the outcome of it all. A world was in uproar!

In a room, far remote from the struggle of life, sat a pretty woman . . . crying softly . . . she had just found her first gray hair!



DREAMS

By Jean Farquar

I DREAM of tall maidens
Whose dark and flowing hair
Falls in great masses,
Accentuating the pallor of their faintly olive skin.

I dream of calm maidens
Upon whose brow is stamped
The seal of quiet strength,
And in whose eyes glows quietly the light of perfect love.

I wake and see my wife.
Vivacious, short, and plump.

LE TESTAMENT

By Emile Delta

MAITRE BOUJU, veuf depuis une vingtaine d'années, vivait en société d'une vieille servante gagé du vivant de sa femme et nommée Toinon.

Celle-ci s'était toujours montrée d'un dévouement sans bornes envers son maître. On assurait qu'elle ressentait pour lui une affection d'épouse et que, s'il lui avait été possible; elle aurait volontiers entortillé le veuf jusqu'à ce que mariage s'ensuivit.

Mais le père Bouju, resté seul, fut insensible aux bons soins, et aussi aux "avances" de sa domestique.

Il avait dépassé de très peu la quarantaine quand il conduisit sa compagne au cimetière; il était donc encore "solide au poste," comme on se plaisait à le reconnaître.

La servante n'avait guère atteint, pour sa part, que la trentaine.

Quoique beau brin de fille, elle ne parvint jamais à "enchaîner" le patron.

Elle s'y employa de son mieux; il en valait la peine. Le père Bouju était, en effet, riche de naissance et son avoir, prétendait-on, avait doublé en prenant femme. Il n'avait pas d'enfants; n'était point mal de sa personne et sa fortune, qui s'étalait en champs immenses et dorés sous le clair soleil de la Beauce, n'était grevée d'aucune hypothétique. Pour un excellent parti, le père Bouju constituait incontestablement un excellent parti.

Quand la patronne mourut, Toinon envia de dev nir sa remplaçante légitime. Elle se fit particulièrement douce et prévenante auprès du veuf; se révéla une miette coquette et s'effraya même un jour du temps perdu devant un miroir à étudier le feu de ses regards.

Malheureusement, elle ne comptait pour tous biens que sa beauté, beauté naturelle de fille des champs superbement campée, saine, robuste, et sa vertu car elle était sage.

Capital insuffisant pour maître Bouju.

Celui-ci n'était certes pas indifférent aux charmes de sa servante; mais l'orgueil plus fort que les sens lui faisait considérer l'union avec une fille sans le sou comme une mésalliance coupable.

Toinon, ignorante de ce sentiment du maître, espérait cependant.

Les mois, les années s'écoulèrent; elle espérait encore, elle espérait toujours, imputant aux moindres événements: pluie, beau temps, récoltes douteuses, cette indifférence qu'elle ne s'expliquait point, — indifférence incompréhensible, d'ailleurs, pour tout le monde, la pauvrete passant bel et bien, aux yeux des voisins, pour n'avoir plus rien autre chose à désirer que la signature de M. le Maire, afin de devenir officiellement et publiquement la seconde Madame Bouju.

Apparences trompeuses. Le père Bouju avait, sans faiblesse, maintenu constamment la distance sociale le séparant de sa domestique.

Quand, vingt ans plus tard, à l'époque de ce récit, Toinon, déçue, aurait pu soupirer le refrain alors populaire:

Combien je regrette
Mon bras si dodu,
Ma jambe bien faite
Et le temps perdu,

le fermier égoïste ne songeait qu'à thésauriser.

Il était devenu parcimonieux, presque avare, — et, à maintes reprises,

sa servante l'avait entendu le soir, dans sa chambre close, aligner des pièces d'or sur la couverture du lit de façon à ce qu'elles ne produisissent pas, croyait-il, de tintement.

Toinon avait maintenant les cheveux blancs et des rides profondes. Dans son cœur de célibataire endurci par l'âge, elle couvait encore un espoir : figurer en bonne place sur le testament du patron.

Elle avait été méconnue dans sa jeunesse ; mais sa vieillesse, qu'elle vivait avec la même fidélité et le même dévouement sous le toit du fermier, méritait d'être récompensée. Cette récompense, elle la recueillerait, elle en était persuadée ; elle y avait droit. A moins que . . . à moins qu'elle ne redevint victime de la même abominable ingratitude ! . . .

Un geste menaçant dénonça son inquiétude et sa rancœur.

Si, seulement, elle pouvait savoir ? Une idée . . .

Ellé simulerait un malaise pendant la nuit. Maître Bouju s'en inquiéterait très certainement ; il se lèverait ; puis, quand il regagnerait sa chambre il n'en verrouillerait pas la porte afin d'être prêt plus vite à toute nouvelle alerte . . .

Il se rendormirait bientôt du sommeil de plomb qui lui était habituel ; alors elle se glisserait dans sa chambre et là, dans le secrétaire où elle le savait déposé, elle s'emparerait du testament, oh ! un instant seulement, le temps de le lire . . .

La nuit suivante, Toinon fut subitement indisposée ; elle appela à l'aide . . .

L'heure d'après, maître Bouju ronflait aussi fortement que s'il n'avait jamais été dérangé . . .

. . . En chemise, pieds nus, retenant son souffle, Toinon se lève.

Les yeux effroyablement ouverts dans l'obscurité, elle rampe jusqu'au secrétaire. Seule, la respiration bruyante du dormeur trouble le silence qui entoure l'indiscrète, l'étreint, l'étouffe . . .

Un effort encore ; un geste . . .

Soudain, maître Bouju se tourne sur son lit, il prête l'oreille, s'assoit, allonge le bras :

"— Qui êtes-vous ? que voulez-vous ?"

Toinon, terrifiée, ne répond pas ; sa gorge est sèche, sa langue paralysée.

Un coup de feu. Maître Bouju a pressé la gâchette du vieux pistolet placé à portée de sa main chaque soir.

Un cri d'atroce douleur, cri de femme : Toinon est étendue expirante, la poitrine trouée.

A la lueur vacillante de la chandelle rallumée, maître Bouju, qui a bondi hors de sa couche, reste debout et regarde hébété, tremblant.

"— Je voulais connaître votre testament, exhale la mourante ; trente ans de services à vos ordres, ça valait quelque chose, savez-vous ! . . . Maintenant, je n'ai plus besoin de rien, allez ; vous m'avez réglé mon compte . . . Pardon ! . . . Adieu ! . . ."



ON oublie l'origine d'un parvenu s'il s'en souvient, on s'en souvient s'il l'oublie.



EHEU FUGACES. . . ! A man's morals turn white much sooner than his hair.



THE BLACK ARTS

By George Jean Nathan

JUST as the operas of the Italian Gasparo Spontini were found to sing better (if the phrase be allowed) in German than in the tongue in which they were originally edited, and as the "Tosca" of Sardou has found its better expression in the musical habiliments contributed to it by Puccini and Molina's prose "El Combidado de Piedra" its poetic juices in the instruments bequeathed it by Mozart—and as, on the other hand, despite the then so-called golden voice of Bernhard, the transplanted drama of Wildenbruch could never be made to "sound right" in the French—so do we find now, and probably not without some trace of stomach-ache to certain venerable and delicate systems, that the mighty melodious line of Shakespeare becomes more musical, more lyrical, in the palate of an Ethiopian than in the palate of a Caucasian. That Shakespeare in the Teutonic is a more tuneful fellow than in the English is pretty generally agreed. But that Shakespeare for his finest effect, his most superb beauty, must look to the super-Pullman porter or elevator chauffeur is surely a nosegay to stagger the vanity, confound the complacency and lance the pride of the white man.

Yet in a performance of "Othello" given by our mezzotint brothers at the York Theater in commemoration of the tercentenary—the performance is said to have been the first of its kind in the world's history—the fact was established with a vitality that first baffled, then put to rout, the plump resistance of sovereign snickers and sardonic elevations of the nose. Under the direction of a Mr. R. Voelckel and with a

company headed by Mr. Edward Sterling Wright, an actor of esteem in dusky art circles, the familiar tragedy was read with a singular impressiveness and an ear-haunting tonal quality. I have, in my day, heard "Othello" from many tongues in many lands, but never, unless my ears deceive me, have I heard a reading now more liquid and silver, now more full-throated and golden, than this reading of the Moor's fable by these ambitious darkies. Here was the music of the prose voiced not in the dry semi-cackle of the Haymarket and up St. James's way, nor the sometimes monotonous ventriloquy of the Volksbühnen, nor the messy twang of Longacre Square. There was from this stageful of blackamoors something of the violin, the alto-saxophone, something of the muffled drum, the harp, something even of the sacring bell, the octavin keyed in B flat, the grand piano, the mescal.

Their articulation—as is, of course, ever the case with the negro—was of that middle ground 'twixt speaking and singing (the articulative quality, to wit, of a pretty young girl's "I love you"), the sort of articulation that, better than any other, is suited to the delivery of such a word weaver as Shakespeare. Gone from this reading were all those familiar mummer tonsil qualities, all those little artificialities, that steal from the poet's lines their rippling loveliness and inject into them, in place, the air of studied phrase, of sedulously practised mouth-pursings before a pier glass. The sound of Shakespeare and the sound of sometimes excessively sibilant Anglo-Saxon speech took on, from the lips of these niggers, something of the

soft fluidity of French, of the musical dropping of the harsh "e" and the "a" of an article before the vowel-beginning noun. For the ugly "I," we had the symphonizing ducky "Ah"; for the unmusical "my" of the text (or the corruptly synonymous "me" of the white actor), the liquid "mah." Consider, in example, the speech of Desdemona:

"Something, sure, of state
Either from Venice, or some unhatch'd
practice
Made demonstrable here in Cyprus to him,
Hath fuddled his clear spirit; and, in such
cases,
Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,
Though great ones are their object . . ."

Picture to your ear the speech as it comes into contact with the tympanum from Anglo-Saxon lips, with its succession of hissing S's, its coarse "shure," its burring R's in "great ones are their," its horridous conflict of R sounds in the brace of words "natures wrangle." Then dream to your hearing the speech from black lips:

Something, shua, ahv state
Eitha fromm Venice, aw some unhatch'd
practice
Made d'monstrable heah in Cyprus to him,
Hath fuddled his clea' spirit; and in such
cases,
Men's nat-youahs wrangle with infe'ior
things,
Though great ones ah thei' object . . .

The "s" sounds remain, true; but the black "s" is, as we know, a more dulcet "s" than that which emanates from Anglo-Saxon teeth.

To turn to another phase of the presentation, we may discover such euphemists as will, not without a genial jocosity, point out that "Othello" interpreted by a corps of decided brunettes must perforce be little else than a burlesque, a thing of freak, forasmuch as thus, at the very beginning of things, is Desdemona's father deprived of his objection to his girl's alliance with a culled gentleman. A licorice Desdemona, obviously (according to the contending critics) being scarcely a persuasive protagonist and one hardly the species to register in the audience's heart a sen-

sitive agitation before the spectacle of a miscegenative marriage. Here we enjoy one of the perfectly patent, facile, and yet intrinsically silly arguments ever seized upon by hair-trigger Hazlitts. It should assuredly be a no more difficult task for an auditorium to imagine the black Miss Margaret Brown as the white Desdemona than it should be for an auditorium to imagine the white Mr. Robert Mantell (face made familiar by the protracted press-agency of countless photographs) as the black Othello. If a mere matter of ten cents' worth of make-up paint is sufficient to subvert and destroy the effect of a great tragedy by the world's greatest dramatic poet, then may God have mercy on our souls!

A negress playing Desdemona and a negro playing Brabantino are—at least as I see it—not more out of the imaginative key than a white woman playing the Japanese Cio-Cio-San in "Madame Butterfly," or the Brahman Lakmé, or the African Selika in "L'Africaine"—or a white actor playing a black rôle in Sheldon's "The Nigger," or a Japanese in "Typhoon" (consider as relevant in this case the semi-similar note of race antagonism between the white race and the yellow), or an Indian in "The Heart of Wotona." If a white actress can smear her face with dark yellow powder and play "The Octoroon" convincingly, for the life of me I can discover no good reason why a dark yellow actress cannot smear her face with white powder and play Desdemona convincingly. As a matter of record, I experienced vastly less difficulty in imagining Miss Margaret Brown as an Italian than, in the past, I have experienced in imagining the Yankee Mr. John Cromwell of Miss George's Playhouse troupe as an Englishman, Mr. Seymour Hicks (in "Broadway Jones") as an American, Madame Suzanne Després as the Danish Hamlet, Miss Constance Collier as the Athenian Thais—or any one of a half dozen of our warped and ancient women stars as delectable young fowl for whom leading men are rampantly willing to sacrifice their lives.

We grant readily that women can cope and have coped successfully with the imagination in male rôles ("L'Aiglon," for instance, or "The Prince and the Pauper"); we grant readily that a piece of canvas with a window and a door painted on it can successfully placate the imagination as the exterior of a house; we grant readily the fourth wall convention, and the theory that two persons conversing with each other always face Mr. Diamond Jim Brady, and that when a man wants to smoke there is always a match handy, and that the sky has wrinkles, and many similar things. Should it therefore be so difficult a joust to coax the imagination to grant that a coloured girl can play Desdemona?

In this connection, parenthetically, does not the eyebrow suffer a lift when one ponders as to what the more intelligently critical of our dark fellow-citizens must think when they look down upon the stage from their gallery exile and observe white actresses like Mrs. Craig, Emma Dunn and Beverly Sitrageaves playing the rôles of negresses—and Mr. William Harris, Jr., casting an entire play dealing with the black race with white actors? Must not such castings seem quite as fantastic to them as does the casting of a black girl for Desdemona seem to the less intelligently critical of our white fellow citizens?

These coons, indeed, deserve a very great credit for their dignified contribution to a tercentenary celebration that, on the part of some of their paler brethren, was marked by a sterling display of hypocrisy and snobbery—and, in the instance of at least one lordly impresario, brilliant incompetence. Some of the histrionism revealed by them was, it is quite true, almost as bad as some of that observed in Mr. Percy Mackaye's so-called community masque "Caliban," and it is further true that some of the gentlemen of the cast gave an exhibition of gestures which for sweep, multiplicity and grandeur has seldom been excelled—even by Thomasheffsky's company in the Ghetto—, yet the fact remains, pretty or no, that

this negro Wright's interpretation of Othello and this negress Brown's interpretation of Desdemona are not only in many ways as good but indeed considerably better than certain conspicuous and blazoned white interpretations of two other celebrated male and two other celebrated female Shakespearean rôles that during the last span of moons have been vouchsafed us under the holiday cloak of the memorial festivities. Let me therefore recommend that you visit the theater when this Wright troupe of black Shakespeareans comes your way, i.e., if it doesn't happen to be a warm day.

II

Were one asked to point to the man whose name, above every other, stood for the typical native music show libretto, the finger quite patently would steer for Mr. Harry B. Smith. Aside from the physiological extravaganzas of Mr. Ziegfeld and the umbilical exposés purveyed at the Winter Garden, excellently soothing forms of diversion both of them by virtue of the circumstance that libretto is almost entirely omitted in their fabrication, the garnished brain children of Mr. Smith may be accepted by the student as a fair gauge of the American tune stage.

In an effort, therefore, to plumb the mien of the average local libretto, with its physical embellishments and salads, I took my person several weeks ago to a Smith fruit called by the name of "Molly O" and deposited it in attendance upon the work. A perusal of the playbill revealed the tidings that, in the geniture of this particular libretto, Mr. Harry B. Smith had enjoyed the assistance of Mr. Robert B. Smith, a gentleman also an obese figure in the fashioning of the native gag-book. But let us not delay; let us hoist the curtain and measure the Smith labours as, from curtain rise to curtain fall, they spirtled into the aural cavity—and with the elements in the Smith libretto let us consider also, by way of appreciating the staging of a libretto at the hands of the

probably not untypical Mr. George Marion, the manner in which such elements are, on the average, boiled into the finished whole designated generally as musical comedy.

At rise, discovered: "The O'Malley Villa, Newport," with a view of the Bay of Naples on the back-drop. Enter Freddy Sands, denominated on the bill of the play as "a little brother of the rich." A modish Newporter, Freddy. And thus, therefore, he to a lady of fashion standing near: "I'm the only guy around here, kid, who knows where (*indicating a beer glass of noble height with his hands*) to get a tall one." Freddy then pretends his walking stick is a musical instrument and fingers it drolly, as if playing a tune upon it. This done, he steps to the footlights and sings a lyric pertinent to Newport about a girl named Anna from Savannah who met a man from Havana. Enter now a young miss and her young man. The latter beseeches a kiss. "But kisses," pouts the young miss, "are intoxicating." Whereupon her young man, "Then let's get soused." Follows a duet, "Marry Me and See," in which the young man urges the young miss to fly away with him and nest like a turtle dove, true love, skies fair above.

From the left upper entrance comes now Dan O'Malley, a whole-hearted Irishman, whose wife, Mrs. Prunella O'Malley, has social aspirations. Mrs. O'Malley, we are informed, is called Prunella because her husband was instrumental in forming a prune trust. Mr. O'Malley has been forced by his spouse to dress up and is in comic distress because his patent leather shoes pinch his corns, to which now and again he dolorously alludes. (Later, Mr. O'Malley sneaks off and reappears in a pair of carpet slippers, thus amusing the audience greatly). Freddy now again exposes himself to view and there follows a colloquy between him and O'Malley, the three most telling points in which are a query as to how O'Malley keeps the peas from rolling off his knife, a suggestion as to the

noiseless eating of soup, and an allusion to Kankakee. Freddy then refers facetiously to Mrs. O'Malley's diamonds as "ice" and—enter the tenor in the uniform of an huzzar and follows a song on the ease with which a man may tell the right little girl when the right little girl comes along.

The huzzar, it develops, is to marry Molly, the niece of the opulent O'Malleys, who, after a quip to the effect that kisses are not round, but elliptical (a-lip-tickle), comes down and sings that love is an art, to warm the heart, oh Cupid's dart. The irresistible Freddy now approaches and, grasping the huzzar by the hand, tearfully congratulates him on his coming marriage to which he (Freddy) killingly alludes as an execution.

This done, Freddy comes down and, walking back and forth, sings about the girl who wins my heart, she must not be too stout, I know what I'm about, she must have a figure, which is *de rigueur*. For "business," Freddy jumps over a low bench and the chorus girls, playing follow-the-leader, imitate his antic. Re-enter O'Malley and Mrs. O'Malley. "When you married me," observes Mrs. O'Malley, somewhat ironically, "I thought you were well off." "When I married you," retorts Mr. O'Malley, somewhat more ironically, "I was way off!" Then a *mot* about the marriage knot being a noose, another about Eve and the figleaf and—Molly comes out again and, in waltz time, sings "When Fortune Smiles," taking the high notes with her eyebrows. Freddy, having in some inscrutable manner insinuated himself once again into the surroundings, presently begins a conversation with the huzzar in which he (Freddy) refers to the forthcoming wedding and playfully observes that he will be at the ringside. "Do you drink anything?" someone asks Freddy. "Yes, anything," retorts Freddy. After an interval, the young miss (described on the bill as Josette, a Viennese artist) reappears with a bunch of flowers. "What are those flowers?" questions Freddy. "They are

wild flowers," replies the young miss. Freddy reaches for them. "Oh, no, no," says the young miss, shrinking back, "you must not touch them." "Ah, I see," retorts Freddy jocularly, "that's what makes 'em wild." The young miss' young man comes on and the trio execute a ditty styled "One Way of Doing It," in which are described the different ways to woo a woman. Between the verse and the chorus, the trio illustrate the lyric with "business." For instance, Freddy pretends to enter a jewelry shop with the young miss, the latter's young man posing as the clerk. "That's a nice necklace, dearie," says Freddy to the young miss; "put it on; you can have it." Then, to the clerk, "How much is it?" "Fourteen," replies the clerk. Freddy proceeds to count out fourteen dollars. "Fourteen thousand," says the clerk. Whereupon Freddy pretends to faint. After another verse, the trio put heads close together and burlesque grand opera, during which Freddy, his back turned, suddenly reverses to kiss the girl and, her place meanwhile having been taken by the young man, much to his dismay kisses the latter instead.

The huzzar now discovers that Molly believes he is marrying her for her money and, his pride stung to the quick, the huzzar decides to leave his bride immediately the ceremony has been performed. After a short interval in which the modish Freddy employs the expression "'at a boy; go to it!" in converse with the society leaders of the environs, the huzzar and his bride come on from the off-stage church, a messenger boy delivers to the huzzar (the Count Von Walden) a telegram which the count-huzzar has caused to be sent to himself and the count-huzzar, bringing his palm up in salute of the messenger boy, tears open the envelope. Farewell, farewell, sings the huzzar; Molly staggers backward; the company moves forward as if to prevent her from falling; and the curtain descends.

The second portion of the entertainment finds us at a "Students' Ball, Vienna." The care-free velvetine stu-

dents are grouped around dressed up like planked steaks, singing merrily. The opening chorus done and the world being a small place after all, guess who should appear in this out-of-the-way place? Right. Freddy. And who else? Right. Mr. O'Malley. "Why, where have you bean?" ejaculates Freddy. "Bean?" retorts Mr. O'Malley, "I've bean in Boston." The conversation turns now to art. "Do you know Michelangelo?" inquires our little scalawag. "Mike?" rejoins Mr. O'Malley, "old Mike Angelo? Sure I know Mike. Me and him used to work on the railroad together." Mrs. Kean, a Newport society matron whom we have met briefly in the first act, happens in at this juncture and interrupts the proceedings to sing an appropriate song entitled "Æsop Was a Very Moral Man," the chorus girls hopping around meanwhile in imitation of dogs, wolves, rabbits, et cetera. Mrs. O'Malley then comes out wearing a small black mask and Mr. O'Malley, utterly deceived, mistakes her for a beautiful Spanish señorita, so he informs us in an aside, and inaugurates a flirtation. "Sacramento fandango?" begins Mr. O'Malley archly. "Chianti spaghetti," returns Mrs. O'Malley demurely. And when subsequently Mrs. O'Malley unmasks and roundly berates her amorous mate for flirting with a strange woman, Mr. O'Malley blandly assures her that he knew who it was all the time. Mrs. O'Malley exits in a huff and there enters again our favourite, Freddy.

Freddy eyes the grotesque costume in which Mr. O'Malley has adorned himself for the ball. "What do you represent?" he asks Mr. O'Malley. "I'm a Spanish humidor," replies the latter. "Humidor," says Freddy, "you mean toreador!" "Well," says Mr. O'Malley, "it's all the same to me. What's a toreador?" "A toreador," says Freddy, "is a Spanish bull-fighter." "Well," says Mr. O'Malley, "I feel like a Spanish onion." Mr. O'Malley then asks Freddy what a toreador does. "A toreador," says Freddy, "is a man who throws the bull." "Well," says Mr.

O'Malley, "I've thrown a lot o' bull myself." "But a toreador throws the bull in the arena," says Freddy. "Well," says Mr. O'Malley, "I had some f-arena for breakfast." Our two friends now—to our great reluctance—take leave of us and the electrician in the gallery throws a flickering light upon the stage while several persons dance, thus giving the dance the semblance of a motion picture (a novel device used in "The Billionaire" in 1902).

Molly is also at the ball, dressed in boys' clothes. So, too, at the ball—will surprises never cease?—is our hero, the huzzar. The latter espies Molly. "And what, pray, might your name be?" inquires the huzzar of Molly. "It might be Smith, but it isn't," retorts Molly. Molly then pretends to be her own brother and chides the huzzar for the latter's treatment of his bride. The huzzar informs his companion that Molly is the only girl he has ever loved—and Molly, her back turned to the huzzar, indicates to the audience her joy at learning that her husband still loves her. After the joke about having been married but it didn't take, the stage is cleared for a specialty dance in which a man dressed like Percy Mackaye grabs hold of a lady in pink tights and swings round a dozen times on his heel, meanwhile holding the lady in pink tights on his shoulder.

After this *divertissement*, Freddy comes on again and tells Josette, who is indulging in egregious meditations, to "roll over; you're on your back." Mr. O'Malley starts to sneak off the stage on tiptoes, and, as he gets near the wings, suddenly bends in his bustle as if some imaginary person had kicked him. Then Mr. O'Malley turns and comes back and, together with the huzzar, Freddy and Hal Rutherford (the program name of the young miss' young man), executes a quartette in imitation of the manner practised in the minstrel shows. After the first chorus, which ends on a prolonged barbershop chord, the four men pick up the stools upon which they have been seated and march off, holding the stools

before them. They return and, placing the stools on the floor, wait for the orchestra leader to sound a flourish to seat them. After the second chorus, they arise and, linking arms, do a cross-step dance and exit. Then they return once more, go through the same business with the stools and sing the third chorus—"little women, little women, funny honey little women, you amuse us, you confuse us, but we love you just the same." This done, they march up stage, swing arms 'round in a circle, entwine arms and repeat the chorus *pianissimo*. As they are singing, a girl crosses the stage and, when opposite the men, lifts up her skirt, inserts a bill in her stocking, and then walks off. "Do you think that girl had a pretty face?" inquires the huzzar of Mr. O'Malley. "I don't know; I wasn't looking at her face," responds Mr. O'Malley, making off after the disappearing hussy. The three other songsters leave the scene. Mr. O'Malley reappears and commences to execute a *pas seul*. As he is dancing, Freddy comes on and pantomimes with his hands that a tall glass of liquid refreshment is awaiting Mr. O'Malley in the wings. Mr. O'Malley abruptly stops dancing and, with a grimace of anticipation, makes after Freddy.

Enters now again the plot. The huzzar has bid \$10,000 for a masked model to pose for a picture he is painting. Molly determines to take the masked model's place and so be once more near her husband, whom (as she tells us) she finds she still loves with all her heart and soul and every fibre of her being. The huzzar discovers Molly's identity and, with voices lifted in song, all ends happily—for the audience.

And there—*peut-on rien voir de plus imposant!*—you are.

What has happened to the Harry B. Smith of a decade and a half ago, the late Harry B. Smith of "Robin Hood" and "The Fortune Teller," "Rob Roy" and "The Highwayman," "The Fencing Master" and "The Serenade"? And what, synchronously, has happened to the eerie institution known as

the American musical comedy libretto? Is it possible that it, too, has succumbed to the prevailing lack of politeness and taste in our theater stalls?

III

What of all this vasty gabble on the New Art of stage scenery, of all this cockawhooping, of all this applause over the abandonment of the old stage embellishments—arching boughs of proscenium trees, real wooden doors and the like—and over the coronation in their stead of fresh impressionistic fancies? It is somewhat difficult to comprehend, surely. Scenery is important only in proportion as the play it adorns is bad. Any kind of scenery will serve for good drama. Consider the best, the most thoroughly enjoyable, plays you have seen in the theater in the last five years. What had scenery to do with them? As a matter of memory, was not the scenery in these cases of an anciently usual and probably shoddy brand? And did this circumstance diminish to the least degree your gaiety?

What need has a Shaw play for scenery—good or bad? Or a play by George Birmingham or Molnar or Bahr or Schnitzler or Schmidt or Dunsany or Donnay or Galsworthy or Thoma or Hauptmann or any other dramatist worth an ear? Or a farce by Guitry or Apel or Bernard or Athis or Hopwood or Hennequin or Gleize or any other intrinsically comic spirit? Fine scenery has little more to do with one's enjoyment of a play than fine china has to do with one's enjoyment of a meal. The actual tonic it provides is superficial, trivial. Forbes-Robertson's presentation of "Cæsar and Cleopatra," with a scenic equipment that looked like the window of a Sixth Avenue cast-off gown bazaar, was unquestionably one of the most delighting theatrical evenings you and I have ever experienced. The same with the local presentation of "Fanny's First Play." (The London production was even shoddier but not a

whit the less palatable.) The same with Bricux's "Incubus," as shown by Irving and Hackney, with the last three revealments by Miss Adams of "Peter Pan" (in as decrepit a stage garb as one may imagine), with "The Poor Little Rich Girl" (when I first saw the play in Philadelphia the scenery had liver spots, eczema and general delirium tremens), with Fulda's "Our Wives." Any number of similarly pertinent instances will readily occur to the individual reader.

Mr. Belasco's excellent mounting of "The Phantom Rival" did not help the play in the slightest. In Vienna and Munich the same play, with comparatively cheap and tawdry investiture, was quite, if indeed not very much more, entertaining. Scenery is necessary only to trick melodramas, such as "Peter Grimm" and "On Trial," and to chiefly pictorial representations such as "The Garden of Allah" and "The Daughter of Heaven."

The several scenic compromises disclosed in the productions of the Washington Square Players in their Band-box habitat during the last theatrical year provide what is probably the happy medium 'twixt the unnecessarily elaborate equipages of the Urban-Belasco academy and the unnecessarily unelaborate subterfuges of the kitchen chair and bed sheet school. Such a setting, for example, as that employed in the first act, or garden scene, of Tchekhov's "Sea Gull"—an idea without doubt borrowed by the local designer from the garden scene done for the Munich Royal Court Theater's exhibition of Goethe's "Tasso" by the Intendant Dr. Carl Hagemann—serves all ends simply, cheaply, admirably. So, too, with such a scene as was employed for the divulgation of Miss Akins' "Magical City"—the inspiration for which may also be traced to the same source.

Jocza Savitz on the one hand. Imre Kiralfy on the other. Between them lies the road to dreams and fancy.

THE ULSTER POLONIUS

By H. L. Mencken

I.

THE general formula of George Bernard Shaw, to wit, the announcement of the obvious in terms of the scandalous, is made so palpable in his new book, "ANDROCLES AND THE LION" (*Constable*), that even such besotted Shawolators as George Jean Nathan will at last perceive and acknowledge it. Here, indeed, the Irish Herbert Kaufman indulges himself in a veritable debauch of platitudes, and the sickly music of them fills the air. In the long and indignant preface to "ANDROCLES" (it runs to 114 pages) all he manages to say about Christianity is what every man of the slightest intelligence has been thinking for years; and yet he gets into his statement of all this trite stuff so violent an appearance of radicalism that it will undoubtedly heat up the women's clubs and the newspaper reviewers, and inspire them to hail him once more as a Great Thinker. It is amusing to rehearse in cold blood some of his principal contentions: (a) that the social and economical doctrines preached by Christ were indistinguishable from what is now called Socialism, (b) that the Pauline transcendent lism visible in the Acts and the Epistles differs enormously from the simple ideas set forth in the Four Gospels, (c) that the Christianity on tap to-day would be almost as abhorrent to Christ, supposing Him returned to earth, as the theories of Nietzsche, George Moore or Emma Goldman, (d) that the rejection of the Biblical miracles, and even of the historical credibility of the Gospels, by no means disposes of Christ Himself, and (e) that the early Christians were persecuted, not because their theology was

unsound, but because their public conduct constituted a nuisance. Could one imagine a more abject surrender to the undeniable? And yet, as I say, these empty platitudes will probably be debated furiously as revolutionary iconoclasm, and perhaps even as blasphemies; and the reputation of Shaw as an original and powerful metaphysician will get a great boost.

In this new book his method of making a scandal with embalmed ideas is exactly the same that he used in all his previous prefaces, pontifications and pronunciamientos. That is to say, he takes a proposition which all reflective men know and admit to be true, and points out effects and implications of it which very few men, reflective or not, have the courage to face honestly. Turn to "Man and Superman" and you will see the whole process. There he starts out with the self-evident fact, disputed by no one, that a woman has vastly more to gain by marriage, under Christian monogamy, than a man, and then proceeds to manufacture a sensation by exhibiting the corollary fact that all women know it, and that they are thus more eager to marry than men are, and always prove it by taking the lead in the business. The second fact, to any man who has passed through the terrible decade between twenty-five and thirty-five, is as plain as the first, but its statement runs counter to many much-esteemed conventions and delusions of civilization, and so it cannot be stated without kicking up a row. That row stems from horror, and that horror has its roots in one of the commonest of all human weaknesses, viz.: intellectual cowardice, the craven yearning for mental ease and safety,

the fear of thinking things out. Shaw is simply one who, for purposes of sensation, resolutely and mercilessly thinks things out—sometimes with much ingenuity and humor, but often, it must be said, in the same muddled way that the average “right-thinker” would do it if he ever got up the courage. Remember this formula, and all of the fellow’s alleged originality becomes no more than a sort of bad-boy audacity. He drags skeletons from their closets, and makes them dance obscenely—but everyone, of course, knew that they were there all the time. He would produce an excitement of exactly the same kind (though perhaps superior in intensity) if he should walk down the Strand bared to the waist, and so remind the horrified Londoners of the unquestioned fact (though conventionally concealed and forgotten) that he is a mammal, and hence outfitted with an umbilicus.

This is all I can get out of the long and highly diverting preface to “ANDROCLES”: a statement of the indubitable in terms of the not-to-be-thought-of-for-an-instant. His discussion of the inconsistencies between the Four Gospels is no more than a *réchauffé* of what everyone knows who knows anything about the Four Gospels at all. You will find all of its points set forth at great length in any elemental treatise upon New Testament criticism—even in so childish a tract as Ramsden Balmforth’s. He actually dishes up, with a grave air of sapience, the news that there is a glaring inconsistency between the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew, I, 1-17, and the direct claim of Divine Paternity in Matthew, I, 18. More, he breaks out with the astounding discovery that Jesus was a good Jew, and that Paul’s repudiation of circumcision (now a cardinal article of Christian faith) would have surprised Him, and perhaps even shocked Him. Yet more, he takes thirty or forty pages to prove that the essential ideas of Jesus, stripped of the interpolations of Paul and all the later volunteers, were the ideas of a militant communist, and

hence of a Socialist—a notion so obvious that it occurred to me (a man but little concerned with either Socialism or Christianity) fully a dozen years ago, and so much a part of my common stock of platitudes that I embalmed it in print last April in a tedious, rubber-stamp review of John Spargo’s “Marxian Socialism and Religion.” Of such startlingly “original” propositions the preface to “ANDROCLES” is all compact. Searching it from end to end with eagle eye, I have failed to find a single fact or argument that has given me any sense of novelty—despite the circumstance, as I say, that I pay little attention to exegesis, and so might be expected to be surprised by its veriest commonplaces.

Nevertheless, this preface makes bouncing reading—and for the plain reason that Shaw is a clever workman in letters, and knows how to wrap up old goods in charming wrappers. When, in disposing of the common delusion that Jesus was a long-faced tear-squeezer like John the Baptist or the average Methodist evangelist, he arrives at the conclusion that He was “what we should call an artist and a Bohemian in His manner of life,” the result, no doubt, is a shock and a clandestine thrill to those who have been confusing the sour donkey they hear every Sunday with the genial, good-humored and likable Man they affect to worship. And when, dealing with the Atonement, he argues against it that it puts a premium upon weakness, and that the man who doesn’t accept it is apt to be a more careful and unflinching fellow than the man who does, he gets the easy dramatic effect of a raid upon the very sanctuary, and so achieves a pleasant devilishness. But, as I have said, these ideas are not, in themselves, new ideas, nor are they really very naughty. I have heard the first of the two maintained by a bishop, and as for the second, I myself urged it against a chance Christian encountered in a Pullman smoking-room three or four months ago, and snickered comfortably while he proceeded from an

indignant repudiation of it to a reluctant confession of its practical truth. I remember well how staggered the poor old boy was when I complained that my inability to accept the orthodox doctrine put a heavy burden of moral responsibility upon me, and forced me to be more watchful of my conduct than the elect, and so robbed me of many good chances to make money. I was very considerate in dealing with this pious gentleman. So far as I remember, I avoided tackling him with any idea that was not wholly obvious. And yet, in half an hour, he was full of the same protesting (and subtly yielding) horror that afflicts the simple folk who support the fame of Shaw.

A double joke reposes in the Shaw legend. The first half of it I have expounded; the second half is to be found in the fact that Shaw is not at all the heretic his fascinated victims see him, but an orthodox Scotch Presbyterian of the most cock-sure and bilious sort. In the theory that he is Irish I take little stock. His very name is as Scotch as haggis, and the part of Ireland from which he comes is peopled almost entirely by Scots. The true Irishman is a romantic; he senses religion as a mystery, a thing of wonder, an experience of ineffable beauty; his interest centers, not in the commandments, but in the sacraments. The Scot, on the contrary, is almost devoid of that sort of religious feeling; he hasn't imagination enough for it; all he can see in the Word of God is a sort of police regulation; his concern is not with beauty, but with morals. Here Shaw runs true to type. Read his critical writings from end to end, and you will not find the slightest hint that objects of art were passing before him as he wrote. He founded, in England, the superstition that Ibsen was no more than a tinpot evangelist—a sort of brother to General Booth, Mrs. Pankhurst, Mother Eddy and Billy Sunday. He turned Shakespeare into a prophet of evil, croaking dismally in a rain-barrel. He even injected a moral content (by dint of abominable straining) into the music

dramas of Richard Wagner, surely the most colossal slaughters of all moral ideas on the altar of beauty ever seen by man. Always this ethical obsession, the hall-mark of the Scotch Puritan, is visible in him. He is forever discovering an atrocity in what has hitherto passed as no more than a human weakness; he is forever inventing new sins, and demanding their punishment; he always sees his opponent, not only as wrong, but also as a scoundrel. I have called him a good Presbyterian. Need I add that, in "ANDROCLES," he flirts with predestination under the scientific euphemism of determinism—that he seems to be convinced that, while men may not be responsible for their virtues, they are undoubtedly responsible for their sins, and deserve to be clubbed therefor? . . . And this is Shaw the revolutionist, the heretic, the iconoclast! Next, perhaps, we shall be hearing of Woodrow the immoralist, of Pius the atheist, of Nicholas the Hindenburgista!

II.

Barabbas the Inexplicable.—Myself concerned all my adult years with the merchenting of printed matter, and in endless confabulation with publishers of all sorts, I nevertheless find myself, at the threshold of senility, in complete ignorance of the principles upon which the rev. Barabbases do business. Surely no trade in all the world is more mysterious, more gaudy with anomalies, more replete with a gay damphoolishness. Why is this book published, and the other one passed over? On what theory do reputable houses affix their imprints to three-fourths of the novels that reach me? On the theory that they are literature? Pish! Even a publisher is at least as intelligent as a bull-frog. On the theory that they will sell? Pish again! It would take a public of maniacs to buy most of them; the majority are so atrociously tedious that they are scarcely praised by the *New York Times*. How many, indeed, actually sell 1,500 copies? Not

one in eight. And yet, as I say, they pour from the presses in chromatic streams, and what is more, the whole cost of printing and marketing them is borne by the publishers themselves, for though it is almost the rule to make a poet pay for his book, the novelists, however bad, are seldom squeezed. I know practically all the American poets, male and female, who have ever actually sold poetry to the magazines, and a canvass of them shows that 88.7 per cent. have been shaken down, at one time or another, by "co-operative" publishers. I know perhaps twice as many bad novelists, and yet not one of them, so far as I can determine, has ever had to fork up a cent. The Barabbases take all the risks and all the losses—and keep on doing it over and over again, spitting experience in the eye each time.

The history of American literature (and of English literature no less) is one long chronicle of publishers' imbecilities. The early books of Edgar Allan Poe, now run up in the auction rooms to hundreds and even thousands of dollars, were brought out, not by the leading publisher of Poe's time, nor, indeed, by any recognized publisher at all, but by what were really no more than neighborhood job printers. So with the books of Whitman; even to this day he is printed, not by the solemn booksellers who gabble about their high services to literature, but by smaller and more obscure fellows. Try to pick up the early books of Ambrose Bierce; you will find imprints you never heard of before. As for Mark Twain, he had to start a publishing house of his own to get a free hand. True enough, when this venture failed (through the fault of his partners) he went back to a regular publisher—but with what result? With the result that it is quite impossible to buy a satisfactory edition of his collected works to-day. The only edition on the market contains many volumes that lack all, or a major part, of the original illustrations. Imagine "Huckleberry Finn" without Kemble's pictures—the best illustrations, it seems to me, that any

book in English has ever had! Moreover, six years after his death his posthumous works remain unpublished and among them, according to his biographer, are at least two books in his very best manner.

A glance at the first editions of Joseph Conrad (now selling for as much as \$30 apiece, though the earliest goes back no further than 1895) shows what a hard time he had finding an appreciative publisher. The first eleven bear six different London imprints. His American editions tell an even stranger story: the first six of them were brought out by six different publishers. When, a few years ago, the firm of Doubleday, Page & Co. conceived the plan of reprinting his books in a uniform edition, it was found impossible to bring together the widely dispersed rights to all of them, and the uniform edition is still full of gaps, and such important works as "Nostromo" and "An Outcast of the Islands" are not in it. I salute this firm for its enterprise—but do not forget that its chief claim to fame is that it suppressed Dreiser's "Sister Carrie." To-day it makes amends by publishing Gerald Stanley Lee and Gene Stratton Porter—surely sweet companions for Conrad, who is bedizened for the department-store trade, by the way, in navy-blue limp leather and all the other gaudy trappings of Corn Belt *Kultur*. The Harpers, after an obscure publisher had shown the way, took over "Sister Carrie"—and then make their own bid for immortality by jumping from under "The Titan." The present publisher of the leading American novelist is the English firm of John Lane. . . . Somewhere on the tablet let us scratch the name of the Houghton-Mifflin Company. Observe its imprint on Eleanor H. Porter's "Just David"—and let your tears flood Boston Common!

It would be easy to string out the tale to endless lengths. Two or three more examples and I pass on. The late John Millington Synge managed to find an English publisher for "Riders to the Sea," but after that masterpiece had

me out the bookselling gentlemen washed their hands of him, and all his later books were printed by a small publisher in Dublin. The manuscript of "The Aran Islands" knocked about the London publishers' offices so long that it wore out, and had to be retyped. Lord Dunsany, undoubtedly the greatest of the neo-Celts after Synge, had to publish his earlier books (that is, in England) at his own expense. Finally, there is the case of the English translation of Nietzsche. An eminent Anglo-American firm brought out four or five volumes, and then lost stomach for the enterprise, and no other publisher would touch it. After long delays, a private admirer of Nietzsche, Dr. Oscar Levy, undertook it at his own expense, and pushed it to rapid completion. The inevitable followed. The books that all the wisecracks of Grub Street had been afraid of made a big success, and Dr. Levy soon had to reprint many of the volumes. When the war came, and all England began reading Nietzsche in search of deviltries, the doctor began rolling up a handsome profit. The firm which had abandoned Nietzsche before Levy entered the lists took over the American rights to the Levy edition later on—and promoted it in a characteristically Barabbasian manner by publishing some of the eighteen volumes in one binding and the rest in another and very different one.

Such is the art and craft of the publisher. Books of intolerably bad poetry reach me almost every day, and once a year I call a holiday and divert the vulgar by exposing their imbecile contents. But no publisher, as yet, has bethought him to publish the *good* poetry of John McClure, though I have made outcry of its existence more than once; nor the poetry of Muna Lee, nor that of Odell Shepard, nor that of Ruth Comfort Mitchell—all of them vastly better poets than two-thirds of the burbling college professors hymned by the *Dial*. Down in Louisville there is David Morton, with the best volume of sonnets I have seen for a long while. Morton is not unknown; his work has

appeared in the magazines; there are plenty of folks who like it. But he will probably eat many a bale of blue grass before he finds a publisher willing to print him between covers. In the end, perhaps, his experience will be that of my old *corpsbruder* at Oxford, Folger McKinsey. McKinsey, in the intervals of heavy newspaper work, has written many very lovely lyrics; I wish I could get a steady supply of them for THE SMART SET. But when he put together his first book, the impossibility of finding a publisher for it quickly became manifest, and so he had it put into type by a bankrupt who kept a bookstore in a provincial city. The joke was then on the publishers, for it sold 3,000 copies within a year—almost a record for poetry in the United States. I offer a keg of Coca-Cola to any publisher who will say that the average for the poetry books that *are* published is more than 300.

Another mystery of publishing is to be found in the incomprehensible system by which review copies are distributed. I have been reviewing books for fifteen years past, and have had that system under my eye all the while, and yet I do no more understand it to-day than I understand liturgical Russian. Whenever I find an author who pleases me and take to praising him lavishly in these pages and calling upon all Christian men to buy him and read him, his publisher is sure to stop sending me his books. And if, on the contrary, I try some poor devil of a scribbler by the *lex talionis* and do execution upon him with Prussian frightfulness, his publisher invariably sends me all of his ensuing works, and favors me with idiotic circular letters testifying to their unquestioned merit. I get, almost every week, books that, under no imaginable circumstances, could be reviewed to any purpose in THE SMART SET—for example, books for little girls, books upon economics and trade, and even scientific books. At least twice during the past year I have been at pains to explain that I do not review war books—that it is the policy of this magazine (copious-

ly supported by the gratitude of its readers) to avoid any discussion of the war, even in fiction or poetry. Nevertheless, I continue to receive nearly all the war books that are published, including the current treatises on preparedness by college boys, old maids, newspaper reporters and job-seekers. More, this present note will not shut off the stream. During the month following its publication I shall receive at least thirty such tomes, despite three fair warnings that all of them will go into my hell-box unread. The Barabbasian skull seems to be of four-ply celluloid; it takes a fearful battering to penetrate it. Or can it be that publishers never read reviews? I begin to harbor a suspicion that way. It is supported by the obvious fact that they never read the books they publish.

III.

The Labial Infamy.—Despite a great laboriousness in the collection of materials, I can find nothing that is novel and little that is sound in "A BUNDLE OF KISSES," by Dr. R. McCormick Sturgeon (*York Comp. Co.*), a York, Pa., savant. Dr. Sturgeon, indeed, takes a thoroughly sentimental view of the thing he presumes to vivisection, and so his book is no more than a compendium of mush. Even when, putting on a scientific black cap, he essays to describe the act of osculation in cold terms, he gets no further than a sonorous gabble about heaving bosoms, red lips, electric sparks and such-like imaginings. The truth is that the physiology of the kiss, like its psychology, has been unaccountably neglected. What reason have we for believing, as Dr. Sturgeon says, that the lungs are "strongly expanded" during the act? My own casual observation inclines me to hold that the opposite is true: that the lungs are actually collapsed in a pseudo-asthmatic spasm. Again, what is the ground for arguing that the lips are "full, ripe and red"? The real effect of the emotions that accompany kissing is to empty the superficial capil-

laries and so produce a leaden pallor. As for such salient symptoms as the temperature, the pulse and the rate of respiration, the learned pundit passes them over without a word. Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons would be a good one to write a sober and accurate treatise upon kissing. Her books upon "The Family" and "Fear and Conventionality" indicate her possession of the right sort of scientific learning and accuracy. Even better would be a tome by Havlock Ellis, say, in three or four volumes. Ellis has devoted his whole life to illuminating the mysteries of sex, and his collection of materials is unsurpassed in the world. Surely there must be an enormous mass of instructive stuff about kissing in his card indexes, letter files, book presses and archives.

Just why the kiss as we know it should have attained to its present popularity in Christendom—or, as Dr. Sturgeon puts it, its universal veneration—is one of the things past finding out. The Japanese, a very affectionate and sentimental people, do not practise kissing in any form; they regard the act, in fact, with an aversion matching our own aversion to the rubbing of noses. Nor is it in vogue among the Moslems, or among the Chinese, who countenance it only as between mother and child. Even in parts of Christendom it is girt about by rigid taboos, so that its practise tends to be restricted to a few occasions. Two Frenchmen or Italians, when they meet, kiss each other on both cheeks. One sees, indeed, many pictures of General Joffre thus bussing the heroes of Verdun; there has even appeared in print a story to the effect that one of them objected to the scratching of his moustache. But imagine two Englishmen kissing! Or two Germans! As well imagine the two former kissing the two latter! Such a display of affection is simply impossible to men of Northern blood; they would die with shame if caught at it. The Englishman, like the American, never kisses if he can help it. He even regards it as bad form to kiss his wife in a railway station, or, in fact,

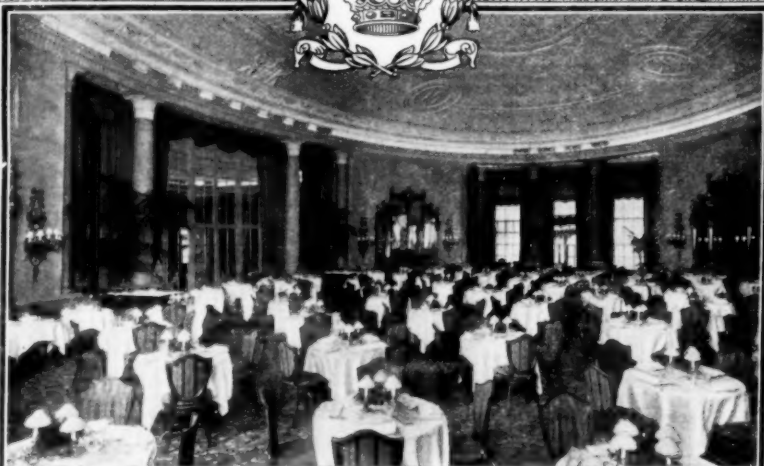
anywhere in sight of a third party. The Latin has no such compunctions. He leaps to the business regardless of place or time; his sole concern is with the lady. Once, in driving from Nice to Monte Carlo along the lower Corniche road, I passed a hundred or so open taxicabs containing man and woman, and fully 75 per cent. of the men had their arms around their companions, and were kissing them. These were not peasants, remember, but well-to-do persons. In England such a scene would have caused a great scandal; in most American States the police would have charged the offenders with drawn revolvers.

The charm of kissing is one of the things I have always wondered at. I do not pretend, of course, that I have never done it; mere politeness forces one to it; there are women who sulk and grow bellicose unless one at least makes the motions of kissing them. But what I mean is that I have never found the act a tenth part as agreeable as poets, the authors of musical comedy librettos, and (on the contrary side) chaperons and the *gendarmérie* make it out. The physical sensation, far from being pleasant, is intensely uncomfortable—the suspension of respiration, indeed, quickly resolves itself into a feeling of suffocation—and the posture necessitated by the approximation of lips and lips is unfailingly a constrained and ungraceful one. Theoretically, a man kisses a woman perpendicularly, with their eyes, those “windows of the soul,” synchronizing exactly. But actually, on account of the incompressibility of the nasal cartilages, he has to incline either his or her head to an angle of at least 60 degrees, and the result is that his right eye gazes insanely at the space between her eyebrows, while his left

eye is fixed upon some vague spot behind her. An instantaneous photograph of such a manœuvre, taken at the moment of incidence, would probably turn the stomach of even the most romantic man, and force him, in sheer self-respect, to renounce kissing as he has renounced leap frog and walking on stilts. Only a woman (for women are quite devoid of æsthetic feeling, a their choice of mates shows) could survive so damning a picture of the thing she venerates.

But the most embarrassing moment, in kissing, does not come during the actual kiss (for at that time the sensation of suffocation drives out all purely psychical feelings), but immediately afterward. What is one to say to the woman then? The occasion obviously demands some sort of remark. One has just received (in theory) a great boon; the silence begins to make itself felt; there stands the fair one, obviously waiting. Is one to thank her? Certainly that would be too transparent a piece of hypocrisy, too flaccid a banality. Is one to tell her that one loves her? Obviously, there is danger in such assurances, and beside, one usually doesn't, and a lie is a lie. Or is one to descend to chatty commonplaces—about the weather, literature, politics, the war? The practical impossibility of solving the problem leads almost inevitably to a blunder far worse than any merely verbal one: one kisses the cutie again, and then again, and so on, and so on. The ultimate result is satiety, repugnance, disgust; even the girl herself gets enough. . . . I lament that Dr. Sturgeon discreetly dodged all such inquiries. His book will please the mushy, for it is full of saccharine evasions; but it is quite worthless as a contribution to psychology.





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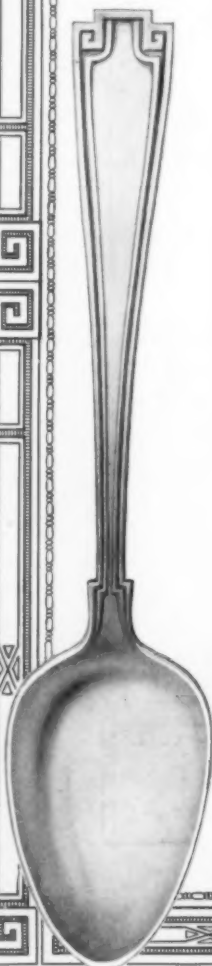
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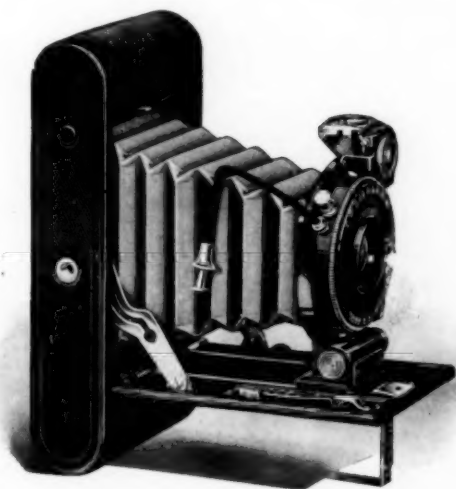
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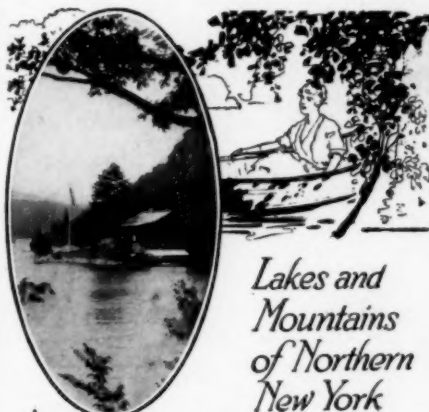


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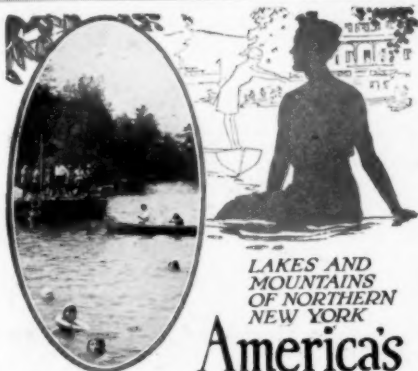
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